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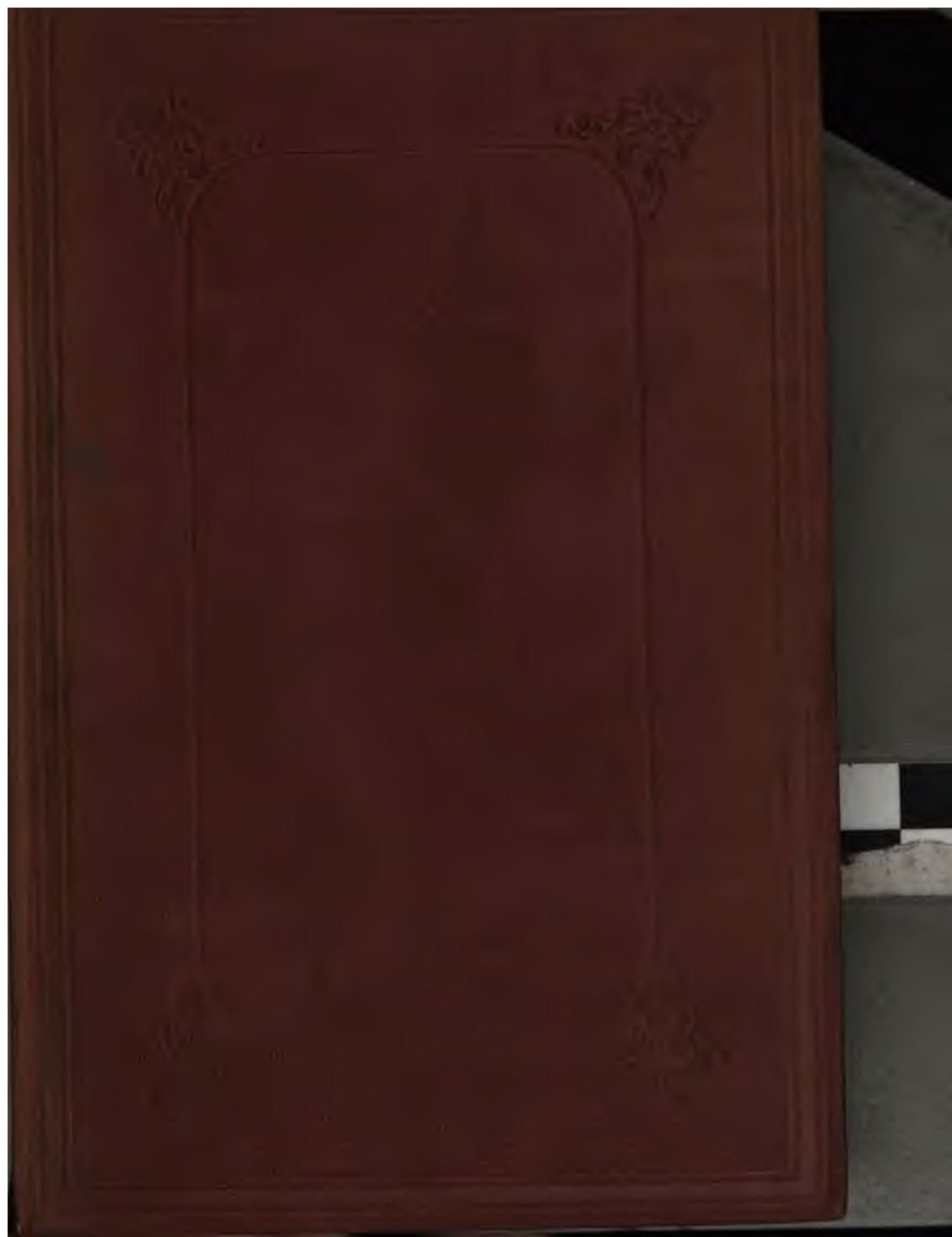
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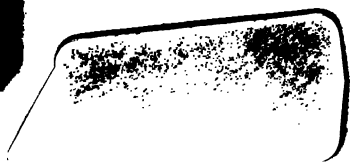
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IDOLATRIES,
OLD & NEW.

IDOLATRIES,
Old & New:
THEIR
CAUSE AND CURE.

BY
JAMES BALDWIN BROWN, B.A.,

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"LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS."



London:
JACKSON, WALFORD, & HODDER,
27, Paternoster Row.
1867.

100. y. 291.

UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS, BUCKLESBURY, LONDON, E.C.

TO THE
REV. THOMAS BINNEY,
WHO BEYOND
MOST MEN OF OUR TIME,
HAS MADE THE
INDEPENDENT MINISTRY OF THE WORD
A POWER,
I WITH CORDIAL AFFECTION
INSCRIBE THESE.

10, THE CRESCENT, CLAPHAM,
March 19th, 1867.

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Sermon i.

The Essential Principle of Idolatry.

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”—1 John v. 21.

IDOLATRY is the besetting sin of man. There are no Churches free from it; no hearts. Three-fourths of the Bible is filled with the history of the struggle of the Spirit of the Lord against idolatry, in the life of the Jewish nation. Had we inspired prophets to write for us the history of Christendom, they would reveal the prolongation of the same struggle in the life of the Christian Church. God against the idols of man's hand and heart, is the heading of each chapter of the higher history of mankind. Romanism is simply “Christianity after the flesh.” It is the fruit of the marriage of Christian ideas and influences with the cravings and passions of man's natural heart. There is hardly an instinct or desire of his sensuous nature, there is hardly a thought of

his carnal heart, which does not find something to satisfy it on its own level in the system of Rome. Not to educate "the natural" and lift it to a higher sphere, but to satisfy it as it stands, is the aim of the Roman Church. And this, without any denial in word of the faith once delivered to the saints. Rome is and always has been the champion of Orthodoxy. Her fidelity to the great Evangelical truths is conspicuous. No leaven of Arianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism, or Rationalism, has ever been suffered to corrupt her creeds; and I suppose that no men have ever handled more vigorously than her great preachers the vital Christian themes, the Cross and Passion of the Lord. Not by the denial of the truth, but by its corruption, by that which she has welded in and striven to amalgamate with it, she has become the harlot of the nations, and has made them "drunk with the wine-cup of her sorceries," until they have been maddened at length, and threaten to turn and rend her in the frenzy of despair.

Instead of quickening the flesh by the spirit, she has buried the spirit in the flesh. Finding man on a low level of spiritual discernment and life, instead of stooping, like her Lord, to lift them, moving among them as a sunbeam moves

through the reek of corruption, she has gone down to abide with them there, "of the earth, earthy," like all around. The light which she brought with her from the higher regions burns faint and dim, and has only strength to reveal the ghastliness of the sepulchre in which she has buried her truth. And the radical error of the whole, the essential vice of the system, is distrust of the will and the power of God to address directly, as a Spirit, that which is spiritual in man. The more we look into the heart of Romanism, the more clearly shall we see that it is a system of influence devised and wielded by man, for the spiritual guidance and government of mankind, in utter distrust of the possibility of their being ruled and guided in any higher and diviner way. The corruptions of Rome, as compared with the truth of the Gospel unfolded by Christ and the apostles, are one thing ; the mind which animates the system, is another. You may assail the corruptions, you may demonstrate their corruptness one by one in succession, and leave them without a shred of warrant from the word of God ; but you do not comprehend the system, you do not deal with it where it is vital, until you see clearly the nature of the mind, the spirit, which, whether

with full consciousness or not, generated these corruptions, and abased the truth to their sphere. That essential mind and spirit of Romanism I find to be blank unbelief in spiritual power, in a spiritual presence with and influence on men; an unbelief which made the golden calf in old time, and is making now the best likeness of it, which it is possible for Englishmen even to say that they believe in, in these modern days.

And this is the point of vital contact between Romanism and that Anglicised Romanism which goes by the name of Ritualism, and which is the uppermost subject in interest and importance at this moment in our public life. I do not call Ritualism Anglicised Romanism, because the vestments, the utensils, the draperies, the altars, the incense, the candles, and yet graver things, are imitated from Roman forms, or rather are the restoration of the forms once in use in England under the Roman rule; but because I believe that, in its heart of hearts, the movement is of the same essence; it springs out of the same sort of unbelief, and it tends, through a long course of mental and moral debasement, to the same end,—atheism and despair. One often smiles to hear this movement denounced, chiefly because its dumb-show, its rush-

lights, and its drapery, are so like those of Rome. The truth is, that a thorough Romanist would laugh at the intense importance which our Romanizers attach to the mere dress of their idea. To him it must seem simply babyish. He would laugh at it much as I expect George Fox would laugh, if he were suddenly to light upon a Quaker assembly in full session in these days. The Romanist really cares little about the mere externals, except as matter of order. The letters of Gregory the Great to Augustine, on his ritual and other perplexities, are charged, not only with singular good sense, but, with a noble freedom of thought on ritual matters, which has always characterized the wisest and ablest rulers of the Roman Church. Even one so far away from Gregory the Great as the Rev. F. Oakley, uses these sharp and stinging words in writing of the Ritualists, whom he scornfully beholds playing at Catholicism within the bosom of a Reformed Church.

“The start which has been made during the last few years, in the direction of ceremonial religion, apart from any corresponding advance in sensitiveness to the necessity of an ordained provision for dogmatic teaching, appears to me to be, not only not a gain, but, a distinct and conspicuous evil. It can have no other effect than

to amuse with mere baubles a number of good men who mistake the form for the substance. . . . I do not, indeed, deny that their mimicries of Catholic ceremonial may do us a service in familiarizing the minds of Englishmen with a type of worship which had been totally obliterated ; but this is a very different thing from saying that they represent a reality where they are, or can be otherwise than most injurious to them, by leading them to confound the outward show with the true spirit of Catholicity.”—Quoted in the *Church and the World*, p. 30.

The truth is, the Romanist believes that he has the reality, the awful power of a priest, whereby he can offer for man the atoning sacrifice to God ; and the dress of the reality, except as a matter of order, is a minor thing altogether in his sight. This intense Anglican earnestness about the cut of a dress or the shape of a spoon belongs to one of the two childhoods. It may express the young child's imitation of all that he can understand and measure, that is, the externals of that which has impressed him ; or, and this is infinitely a darker matter, it may express the belief of the second childhood, at which the man, by neglect of his spiritual power, has arrived at last,—that there is nothing but the external to care about ; that there is no hope of any man's arriving at an interior conviction and possession of truth.

But it is not in the details that the real likeness lies. Were that all, we might leave it to wither as the mushroom of an hour. It is in what is behind the imitation, in that which makes men care for the imitation—the hopeless feeling about truth, which makes this clinging to venerable forms as though they were the bread of life, of any possible comfort to the soul—that we must seek the vital principle of the movement, if that can be called vital which is of the essence of death. It is in this state of mind about truth and spiritual power, that the likeness of Ritualism to Romanism is to be found, and to something which is behind Romanism—Idolatry, in every country and every age of the world.

Unbelief in the power of the truth to make itself manifest to human minds, and in the power of the Spirit of Life to make His presence felt in human hearts, which lies at the root of all the corruptions of Rome, is her point of contact with pagan idolatry. Rome is idolatrous, just for the reason for which man is idolatrous. And Ritualism is idolatrous; it bows, enveloped in the smoke of incense, with a homage which simple men find it difficult to distinguish from worship, before things—things shaped by art and man's device,—for pre-

cisely the same reason which draws the Italian brigand to his image of the Virgin, the Arab to his amulet, or the Negro to the shapeless stock or stone which does duty for his god. The one, is the idolatry of keen, intelligent, and subtly cultivated humanity; the other, is the idolatry of stupid and brutal humanity. But, in essence, they are one—the disposition to look to things, instead of to the living God, in living communication with human spirits, for that light and that life which man knows that he must find somewhere, or die.

But what is an idol? That is the first question that stands in our way.

An idol is an object which man sets up to worship instead of God. This is the answer which many would at once give to the question, and which would probably be generally accepted as an adequate statement of the truth. If this were the true account of idolatry, my charge of Anglican idolatry would at once fall to the ground. I dare not say of the most slavish Anglican or Roman Ritualist, as he kneels reverently to be incensed, and then bows in humble adoration before a material wafer or cup, that he is consciously adoring some other object than God. I believe that the Ritualist may enter on his formal service with as sincere

a belief that he is doing God's will, and meeting God in the way of His appointment, as the most silent, spiritual worshipper at a Quaker meeting. And, if I could fairly urge the charge of idolatry only against those who, refusing to worship the living God, worship a dumb, dead stock in His room, as though that had power to bless and to save, I should be found a false witness against the Ritualists of both the Roman and the Anglican Churches. But this is not the Scriptural, though it may be the popular, notion of idolatry. Let us try to discern what the idol is, out of the records of the word of God. We will go back to a very early instance, that we may study it in its very spring :—

And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either

good or bad . And now, though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? . . .

. . . And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; and Mizpah; for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.—Genesis xxxi. 26—30; 45—50. Here is an idolater. A man with gods which could be carried off. A man who was in desperate distress when his gods were carried off, and who felt that he had lost, in losing them, some very precious benediction on his life. And yet the man was capable of some measure of spiritual fellowship with God. He knew the name of the Lord, and was prepared at a very important crisis to submit his conduct to the guidance of His hand. He would not “do hurt” to Jacob though justly incensed, because the Lord

had forbidden him ; and yet he was wretched without his gods. Nay, when he had set up a heap of witness between himself and his crafty son-in-law, he consecrated it with the pious and beautiful words, "*The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.*" Here was a man with a very sincere belief in God, and fully convinced that God's blessing was a supreme necessity of his life ; and yet he felt far more sure of that blessing when he had his idols with him in the house. He was beginning thereby, little conscious of it, that downward course which inevitably lands the idolater at last in the belief that the stock or the stone is his god. The essence of idolatry, then, if this chapter from its early history can throw any light on it, is the connecting the Divine presence and blessing with *things* cognizable by the senses or the understanding, in a manner altogether independent of the question, whether through them there is any living communication with the living God, as a Spirit, established and maintained by the soul.

Let us now pass a stage further, and see how the matter stands in the case of national idolatry.

Here, again, we can stand by its very cradle, as it were, and watch the earliest manifestations of its spirit. We can know its nature surely, for we can

trace it to the spring. *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt! And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.—Exodus xxxii. 1—6.* The golden calf was made, and “a feast unto the Lord” was proclaimed. The very idol was saluted with the hymn of adoration. “*These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!*” We have in this event the

strongest confirmation of the view of idolatry which the history of Laban suggests to us. It is impossible that either Aaron or the people meant deliberately to say, "We have all been under utter delusion about the God of our fathers, whose name we thought that we knew, whose voice we thought that we had heard, whose splendour we thought that we had seen, when our eyes sank dazzled by that awful light. But it is all a mistake. There is no God of our fathers. There was no living Being to talk with Abraham, to wrestle with Jacob, and to speak with Moses from the burning bush; the calf is the only creature in the universe that may claim the name of God." It is palpable that Aaron could mean nothing like this. He had the notion of the Lord Jehovah in his mind, he had the wonderful works which He had wrought in his memory, when he moulded and graved that calf, and said, "This is the pledge of the presence and blessing of your unseen, unknown God. Carry this with you, and you carry Him with you. Keep this with you in your camps, and you are safe."

And we are able to trace this desire for some visible assurance of the Divine presence to its source. "*Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us*

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up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Moses had been to them that which the golden calf was fashioned to supply. They had literally made an idol of their leader. "*The man that led us up!*" How constant, how intensely earnest, had been his protestation,—“I am not your leader. In me, no power of guidance or benediction dwells. The Lord is your leader; I am but the mouthpiece of His word, the organ of His spirit; and there is, there can be, no blessing for you, unless you are looking through me to Him who is above and beyond.” It is manifest that they did not look to God, and would not. Moses was their god; when Moses vanished, then God vanished. And the craving for some symbol of the Divine presence which they could carry with them, and pet and fondle while they ate, drank, and played, had become so absolute, that, when the form of their glorious leader vanished in the splendour which some awful Presence had flung round the peaks of Sinai, they made a golden bull instead of him, and felt light-hearted and jovial for the exchange.

It was not only that God was too dread for them to approach, though He called Himself by the tenderest names. Moses was too dread. He asked

of them too much effort, too much purity, too much charity ; and they seized the occasion of his mysterious absence to set up some image of God which would be more compliant and complacent in his room. But still it was a feast of the Lord which they meant to celebrate. The whole value of that idol arose from their belief, that it was the sign and the pledge of the benign presence of their unseen and awful Lord.

One other conspicuous instance of the nature and results of idolatrous trust will suffice. And in this case, it is in connection with that which God had Himself constituted and ordained, to be a constant channel of communication between the people and Himself. First, in the book of Exodus we have this direction :—“ *And let them make Me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. And they shall make an ark of shittim wood : two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.* ”

. . . . And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold : two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark ; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”—Exodus xxv. 8—11 ; 16—18 ; 21, 22. Here was an ordained sign of God’s favour to the people. There was an appointed place, nay, *the* appointed place, of national communion with God. The time came when the people were fairly established in their own land, and, having fallen into grievous sin, were smitten before their foes. The Lord had forsaken them in the hour of battle, and miserable rout and slaughter were the result. Let us see how they set to work to bring the Lord into the midst of them again, to ensure the help of His

mighty hand in the day of battle, and make sure the victory over their exulting foes. *And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people went to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that*

ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you : quit yourselves like men, and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent : and there was a very great slaughter ; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken ; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.—1 Sam. iv. 3—11.

Surely this is a very remarkable and significant history. Here is not a man-made idol—a thing which man makes in God's dishonour, likening the invisible God to bird, or beast, or creeping thing ; but a thing which God had made to be a kind of pledge of His presence with them, and a channel of communication between Himself and the national heart. And yet, because their trust rested on the thing, and not on the living God who made the thing, because they brought the thing into the camp (as they take in these days the sacrament to the dying), instead of bringing the living God by repentance and faith into their ignorant and sensual hearts, they were again miserably beaten, and the ark in which they trusted passed over as a spoil of battle into the host of their foes. Here is again, under another form, the pure essence of idolatry. And it is a kind of idolatry which is very significant

as an instruction and a warning in our present difficulties. It is idolatry of precisely the same kind and measure as when a Christian priest puts a morsel of bread into dying lips after a hasty word of confession, and says, in the apprehension of the trembling sinner who receives it, "There is the pledge of the presence of the Lord of Death and of Hell as you pass through the dark valley, and there is the key to the Paradise beyond."

I might carry the argument further by instances adduced from every book of Scripture and every era of Jewish history ; but I trust that I have said enough to establish the position, that, whatever idolatry may become through its brutalizing influence on personal, family, and national life, in its essence it is not a turning away from God to worship stock or stone in His room, but rather a desire to get hold of something which seems to give promise of the Divine blessing, without any spiritual contact between the soul of the worshipper and God.

You will see at once how this argument bears on the question of Anglican idolatry. If we say to a rigid Ritualist, or a bigoted Sacramentalist, This use of the forms of Divine worship, of the Lord' ordinances, of the ordained ministry, is at heart idolatrous, and the inevitable fruit of idolatry will

in time appear, it is not enough for him to answer, It cannot be idolatry, for we are not setting up the forms, the ordinances, or the priest in the place of God : we know perfectly well that, unless God is sought through these things, they are delusions and snares. Laban might have made the same answer. Aaron might have made the same answer. The Israelites who took the ark down into the field of battle might have made the same answer. Every idolater throughout the world, whose conceptions of the Divine are not wholly brutalized, might make the same answer. All intelligent worshippers of idols would affirm that the idol was nothing to them, except as it was a sign to them of the presence and favour of the supreme God. I know not anywhere a more wonderful acknowledgment of the glorious and benign nature of the supreme God, than in Krishna's description of Brahma in the "Bhagavat-Gita," a poem which is charged with the idolatrous spirit, and speaks of inferior deities in almost every page.

The true question, the vital question, is, what sort of God is man seeking ; of what presence can these things be the token, and of whose benediction are they the guarantees ? What God is behind your cloth of gold, your violet velvet, your succession of

colours, your smoke of incense, your sacred wafer, your diluted wine, your muttered prayers, and your Latin hymns? And is it not certain that such a God as you are seeking, with all the elaborate apparatus of propitiation with which a slave would approach an Eastern despot, will become in the end but the shadow of a shade to your living spirit, and leave you, at last, nothing but tunics and platters to worship in His room? The main question is never about particular forms—their beauty or absurdity; the vital question concerns the spirit which is behind those forms. Is it a spirit which so clings to the form as a visible and tangible Divine thing, that it makes no effort to lift itself to the Divine Being beyond, before whose face the form would become as indifferent as the door by which we pass to the presence of a friend; or is it a spirit which touches the form but lightly and for the moment, as it presses onward and upward to the living Presence, the form being but as the mere letters of a sentence which fade utterly into the background, as the meaning of the words which they compose enters into the soul.

These are the vital questions of Ritualism. These are the heart-searching topics of our times. Do we care to meet God face to face as Moses did, to search His word, to be searched by His

Spirit, and to walk in the light as beings capable of an intelligent communion with Him ; or do we seek Him in services and sacraments, and in submissions to authoritative human teachings, as things which *in themselves* He regards as acceptable, the due participation in which is the nearest approach that an ignorant and sin-burdened spirit can make to the living God ? Do we believe that union with Christ is a spiritual thing to be sought spiritually by prayer and faith, that union with His body means union with His will, union with His mind, union with His heart ; or do we believe, with the Ritualists, that “ Dissenters and all Protestants know nothing whatever really of union with Christ, although they talk of it. They can believe in Him and love Him, conform their hearts and minds to His will, and hope in Him ; but to be united with Him is an idea utterly beyond the reach of any one who does not comprehend the true nature of the sacraments.”—*Church and World*, p. 234.

There are two distinct and widely different views of union with the Lord. The one, I hold to be a true and spiritual, the other, a base and idolatrous view of that union. It has the old idolatrous taint about it, a *thing* is made the con-

dition of spiritual fellowship ; an ordinance—remember the ark in the field of battle—a celebration, is the ground of our assurance that we possess the most complete and intimate union with Him, to be one with whom is life eternal.

And to this idolatry you and I, as well as Anglicans and Romanists, are deeply, radically prone. Some sense of a Divine presence we must have. Driven out consciously from the Divine presence, we could only moan, “My misery is greater than I can bear.” But the effort to know God is a high effort. The endeavour to answer, with the pure word of truth, the questions which the cravings of the heart, the instincts of the soul, the ideas of the reason and the experiences of the life force on us, is a life-long strain. God is far ! Truth is hidden ! It is a mystery, and it is easier to get lost in it than to solve it. Let us see if we cannot get some comfortable sense of the Divine presence, and some comfortable assurance that we hold the truth, in some cheaper and easier way ! Then our idol-making begins. God has told us to do this and this, as a means of intercourse with Him—to enter this temple, to touch this ark, to partake of this bread. Here, then, surely is something which, in itself, must please Him ; doing

this, we are about something which gratifies Him; and, if we do it reverently, we shall, in virtue of the act, bear some blessing away. There is nothing with which the sense of the Divine presence and blessing has once been associated, which may not become an idol to us. We renew our contact with the object; we are terribly tempted to rest there, and to take it for granted that we have renewed our intercourse with God. We will not come to the Light. We will not come to the Life. We like the gloom of the idolatrous grove. We mistake the awe which the gloom awakens for the childlike fear of God. We like the touch of the brazen serpent. We mistake the thrill which its dread yet benign associations send through us, for a fresh gush of the tide of life. The idol we can see and touch, and we can assure ourselves that it is near us. If we lose it, shall we not be little children groping in the darkness for the unknown unknowable God?

“*As for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him.*” Are not the Ritualists saying precisely the same of St. Paul, St. John, and even of the Lord. “Their words,” they say, “their letters, are here, but they are a sealed book to us. We can only approach their meaning through the traditions of

the Church. Like Moses, they have gone up into the light, too dazzling for our eyes to follow them. Alone here in the wilderness, let us take the graving tool, and fashion the golden calf of Church authority in their stead." A sure guidance, without the trouble and pain of a constant and vigilant self-direction, is what the soul is ever craving. And there is no such guidance. To believe that there is, and to trust to something which is supposed to afford it, whether it be the first four Councils, the whole body of Church tradition, the judgment of Churchmen in conclave, or the *ipse dixit* of the Pope, is to walk in darkness, and to stumble on to a final overthrow. God will have no faithless drawing back from the endeavour to know Him, and to walk in His light. "*This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*" To resign the hope of knowing God, and to rest content with knowing what man can tell us of Him instead is to judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life; it is to confess ourselves unable to fulfil the noblest duty, and to wear the crowning glory of our manhood, living as the friends of Christ. "*Henceforth I call you not servants but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth,*

but all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

To return to the beggarly elements of the law, the materials of the earliest school discipline of our race, is to confess that Christian manhood is a hopeless height of attainment, Christian freedom a Utopian condition of privilege and power—dreams of children who must expect to abide in the estate of babyhood, fed on the pap of authority and the pulp of ordinances, until death transfers them to the lowest forms of the school of heaven.

Free men in Christ, defend your freedom ! Sons of God, uphold your honour ! Heirs of the kingdom, hold fast the earnest of your inheritance—the right and the power to behold with open face the glory of the Lord, and to talk with Him, heart to heart, as He is revealed in Christ, as a man talketh with his friend !

One word more. I can conceive that some may find it hard to believe that these Ritualists are in earnest ; and that, in this nineteenth century, they can have any hope of re-establishing the mediæval system, apart from the mediæval life which has flowed away on the stream of time, as a means of permanent and powerful influence over men. We

are tempted to look upon it as the toy of a few over-cultured and weak-brained sentimentalists, who find the kind of pleasure in these pompous offices which Cardinal Wiseman tells us he ever took in a "great function," and which is really no other than a child's interest in a show, with a dash of mystery thrown in to keep the imagination in play. But this would be a grand mistake. These men are thoroughly in earnest, and they believe entirely in the kind of influence which their shows and images wield. There are able men conducting the movement; it is easy to trace a higher strain of thought and power in the recent literature of Ritualism, than the vapid silliness which characterized so large a proportion of the "Tracts for the Times." I can hardly do better than close my argument by a remarkable quotation from a significant essay on "The missionary aspects of Ritualism," in the book which is at once its confession of faith and directory of works. "Any one who chooses to bring the whole Ritual question to a simple test may do so effectually thus. Take two street Arabs perfectly ignorant of Christianity. Read to one of them the Gospel narrative of the Passion, and comment on it as plainly as you may. Shew the other a crucifix, and tell him simply what

it means. Question each a week afterwards, and see which has the clearer notion of the history of Calvary."

Brethren, if these things be so, and if these are to be our judges, we cannot but reflect sadly on the profound mistake which was made in heaven eighteen centuries ago, in sending, not a bag of crucifixes, but the tale of the Cross and Passion, to be God's Gospel of salvation to the world. "*Little children,*" and we are all the little children of the heavenly life, "*keep yourselves from idols !*"



Sermon ii.

The Idolatry of the Priest.

"Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest."—Judges
xvii. 10.



BELIEVE that we are approaching the central position of Ritualism, and of all High Church pretensions and claims, when we utter the word Priest. Perhaps this is the fundamental question at issue between those who take the spiritual view, and those who incline to the ecclesiastical view of the nature and mission of the Church—Is there a priestly order under the dispensation of the Gospel, or not? Does the Jewish priesthood prolong itself through the Christian ministry, or did it vanish with the blood of bulls and goats, and the ceremonial ordinances with which it was conversant, and in which it so buried whatever of spiritual virtue might once have dwelt in it, that both office and order became hateful in the sight of heaven. The ecclesiastical controversies of these times seem to me to be tending very markedly to

simplify the questions which are really at issue between the two great parties who in every age have divided the Church—those who believe in the Spirit as a spirit of life and liberty, and those who, in any high sense of the term, do not. I think that we are coming to see very plainly that there are but two forms in which office and authority may be conceived of in the Church, which have any interior consistency; the one making manifest spiritual power the supreme consideration, and the other resting on outward marks and notes, as divinely ordained indications of the quarter in which the power to teach and to rule may be expected to dwell.

The question is a very simple one. Did Christ, “*when He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, and gave gifts to men,*” purpose to rule the Christian Church, as substantially He ruled the Jewish, by raising up individual men, and endowing them with spiritual gifts according to His own wise pleasure, leaving those gifts to speak for them, and thus keeping alive by constant appeal to it the faculty of spiritual discernment in human hearts? Or did He appoint the founders of an order of teachers, who should be known in all ages, as the Jewish priests were, by certain outward marks and

modes of succession, to whom He gave authority to expound His truth and administer His sacraments, and for whom He claims, not the attention only, but the homage and submission of the Church? If the latter, then the whole principle and practice of Ritualism, nay, much more than Anglican Ritualism, would present no sort of difficulty to me. If Christ intended to set men in authority over their fellow men in His Church, it would seem to me quite natural that He should have provided an elaborate and impressive ceremonial to exalt their dignity, and reinforce their power. My only wonder, in that case, would be, that the whole New Testament is not full of it. The more the man could be buried under the ritual upon this principle, one would think, the better. The more he could be separated from the ordinary conditions of life, the better for his influence as the mortal vicegerent of the Eternal King.

The kind of influence which a splendid ritual exercises on the sensuous part in man, is of the same order as the guiding influence which human authority can put forth. If the heavenly powers have any hope that human authority and power of spiritual direction, however solemnly constituted and carefully sustained, can guide men effectually, or on

a large scale, even help to guide men effectually, in the right way, then I should quite expect that they would supplement it with a gorgeous ritual, that they would dress their delegates on earth in vestments of surpassing splendour, fling round them a cloud of incense, and try to cheat men into the belief that the fellow mortals whom they saw through this haze of splendour, were clothed, both in their words and in their works, with the awful authority of God.

Once let it be granted that there are men who have commission to speak authoritatively in God's name, to those of whom the apostle said, "*Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things,*" "*Ye have the mind of Christ,*" and to whom, in terms yet more solemn, the Lord declared, "*Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth ; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you ;*"*—I say, let this once be granted, and then purple, violet, and rose-coloured velvet, white silk, cloth of gold, cope, stole, censers,

* It is idle to say that these words were spoken to the apostles alone ; they are in precisely the same key-note which the apostles employ in speaking to the great body of the disciples in their discourses and epistles.

holy wine and holy bread may all come in the train. They belong to the same order of influences, they aim at the same result, and they imply the same condition—the perpetual spiritual babyhood of mankind. But if Christ did not mean this; if He came to bring a new authority into the world, the authority of His truth and His love, as they could present their claims to that which is spiritual in man; if He had no hope of accomplishing anything for men, save as He could bring that truth and love to bear on their consciences and hearts; then there is a far graver charge against Ritualism than that it contemns the rubrics and sets at defiance the articles of any particular Church or Churches, or even that it flies in the face of the plain meaning of the most solemn and explicit passages of the word of God. It underlies a heavier charge than this; the most terrible condemnation under which anything human can come, is branded, not on its practices only but on the spirit out of which they spring, “*It tramples under foot the Son of God: it counts the blood of the covenant with which He was sanctified an unholy thing, and does despite to the Spirit of Grace.*”

At the same time, I can perfectly well understand that there is something singularly attractive to some minds, and those not the least capable of being

objects of interest to their fellows, in the idea of a paternal authority in spiritual things visibly and audibly expressing itself in the world. The child comes into the world and grows up under paternal authority : it is an invaluable guidance to him, and it is ordained to that end by the Lord. We are all children in large measure through life ; is it not likely, it is said, that God would provide for the continuation of that paternal authority, and for man's further guidance in his ignorance and weakness ; and has He not set the visible organ of it in the Church. It is as " Holy Father," " Papa," " Pope," that the chief pretender under this system claims the submission and allegiance of mankind. I answer, that it is not only likely but indisputably certain, that God has provided some paternal guidance and government for the souls who pass, full of ignorance and weakness, out of the haven of the home on to the misty and storm-vexed seas of life. I read that the great end of the Incarnation was to declare the Father to the world. Not simply to teach man to say " My Father !" and to think of a Father's tender compassion, in drawing near to God ; but to reveal the whole system of things with which man finds himself in contact as a system of Fatherly guidance and benediction, and to make man conscious at every point

of the tones of a Father's voice, and the touch of a Father's hand. The world is full of voices which have a message to man's spirit ; it is full of expressions, as of a living countenance, which have a meaning to his heart. Man has a myriad means of acting on and aiding his fellow man ; of giving him help, of shewing him light, of inspiring strength and courage in his hours of need. Blessed be God there is help everywhere, guidance everywhere, if we will look for it ; and Christ tells us that it is the Father's help, whencesoever or howsoever it may seem to come. It is part of the method of that Fatherly government of your spirit into which you have passed out of the home of your childhood. Whoever or whatever has a word of truth to speak to you, a ray of light to flash on you, a strengthening touch to afford to you, is the Father's minister to bring home to you the Father's help in your hour of need. Keep your eye and your heart open to watch for the revelation of a Father in everything, animate and inanimate, material and human, which is around you, and His aids will never fail you ; you will never lose the sense that it is a home which is around you, nor will you miss the shield of a Father's power, wisdom, and love over your life. But once suffer yourself to

dream that this infinite communication with your spirit can be shut up within the bounds of the wisdom and love of a man, or an order of men, poor and helpless as yourselves; once learn to rest on the authority of a man or men as the expression to you of the Paternal authority of God, and you deny the Father, though you may think to honour Him, and are resting your hope on an idol in His room.

I am not about to criticise any of the High Church views of the Ministry in detail, or to enquire how much the word Priest does or does not imply when employed by the writers of this school. I wish again to get at the heart of the matter if I can, and to discover the essential form of the notion which is behind all the varieties of statement which you will meet with in what calls itself Catholic Literature, and then to compare it with the idea of a man's ministry to man in spiritual things, as it is set forth in the word of God.

I think that the matter has been much complicated by the righteous indignation, with which the great mass of our fellow-countrymen are moved to visit the attempt to restore the "Sacrifice of the Mass" in the services of the Anglican Church, which the leaders of this movement hardly hesitate to avow. It might perhaps be unwise to

attach too much importance to passages in the paper entitled "Thirty Years in the Church of England," which is not the least interesting of the essays in "The Church and the World." It is understood to have been written by a lady who has profound sympathy with the movement, and whose knowledge of its history is extensive and accurate. Still it would be unjust to make the leaders of a movement responsible for the language of enthusiastic feminine devotees. Therefore we should attach less meaning to such a remarkable passage as the following, if the sentiments which it so vehemently expresses were not reiterated, in a variety of forms, in other and more authoritative contributions to the book.

"But far beyond all books is the possession of that blessed Presence which in general is given to us in our churches so grievously seldom, and for such a few moments, instead of being, as it is to our more fortunate Roman brethren, an abiding joy and resource continually. At the foot of the Altar alone we learn what our life is, and what our sorrows mean—that here is the point where Heaven and earth meet, and where GOD Incarnate, under the form of Bread, joins our manhood in His with the GODHEAD. This conviction, when it once mastered my own mind, dissipated my last fancy that the practice of the Anglican Communion was superior to the Roman.

Granted all manner of abuses present on their side and absent from ours, but nothing can ever make up for the loss of that perpetual Presence, or for the practical change that has changed our clergy from a sacrificing priesthood into a preaching ministry.”—*The Church and the World*, p. 236.

“The altar,” “the sacrifice,” “the priest,” are words more frequently on the lips of the teachers of this school, than on those of priest or prophet under the law. No doubt there are very ingenious distinctions drawn between the Anglican view of the Real Presence and the Roman dogma of Transubstantiation ; and Dr. Pusey, together with other writers of the Anglican school, contend with an earnestness which has the manifest glow of truth about it, for the Protestant belief in the one, complete, all-sufficient, and final atonement for sin which was offered on Calvary. The idea of reenacting the propitiatory sacrifice they absolutely disown*, but they suffer themselves to use language which simple people would find it exceedingly hard to distinguish from the Roman language concerning the sacrifice of the Mass, as for instance in the words—

“As the most holy Body and Blood of CHRIST, the alone acceptable Victim to make our peace with God, are

* See the *Eirenicon*, p. 28, and passim.

offered, that is continually presented and pleaded, by Jesus Himself in Heaven, naturally, as we may say, and openly, so the same most holy Body and Blood are continually presented and pleaded before God by CHRIST's representatives, acting 'in His name,' and 'by His commission and authority, on earth.'"—*The Church and the World*, p. 339.

I extract another remarkable passage from the "Eirenicon."

"Dr. Manning proceeds, 'If it [the Church of England] recognizes an undefined Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, it formally imposes on its people a disbelief in Transubstantiation and the Sacrifice of the Altar.' Those before us have pointed out, how the Church of England taught, not an 'undefined,' but 'a real Objective Presence of Christ's Blessed Body and Blood.' Take, e.g., the statement framed word for word on our Formularies, in a work* which received the sanction of two of our then Archbishops, to whom it was, with permission, inscribed, and which used to be recommended to Candidates for Holy Orders.

"'Taking as her immutable foundation the words of Jesus Christ—"This is My Body,"—"This is My Blood of the New Covenant," and, "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath Eternal Life," she believes that the Body or Flesh, and the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Creator and Redeemer of the world, both God and Man, united indivisibly in one Person, are verily and indeed given to,

* *Palmer on the Church*, i. 526.

taken, eaten, and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper under the outward sign or form of Bread and Wine, which is on this account the "partaking or Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ." She believes, that the Eucharist is not the sign of an absent Body, and that those who partake of it receive not merely the figure, or shadow, or sign of Christ's Body, but the reality itself. And as Christ's Divine and Human Natures are inseparably united, so she believes that we receive in the Eucharist, not only the Flesh and Blood of Christ, but Christ Himself, both God and Man.'"—*The Truth and Office of the English Church* (Pusey), p. 23.

But we must not be misled by words. There is something in the term "a sacrificing Priest" which has unhallowed associations to English ears; and it is difficult to restrain the righteous indignation which seeks expression, when the hateful image rises up under the simple surplice of a minister of the Reformed Anglican Church. But the essence of the priestly function is not sacrifice. A non-sacrificing priest is as great an evil in the Church as a sacrificing priest, and just as baneful in his influence on men. The one form of the thing is quite as unchristian, and may easily become as idolatrous as the other. The essence of the matter does not lie in the acts which the priest does or is supposed to do for the people, but in what he is felt to be to them,

the want in their being which he undertakes to supply. There is a very deadly error behind this idea of a sacrificing priest. It betrays an awful unbelief in the spiritual and therefore abiding power of the sacrifice once offered on Calvary, and it makes God altogether such an one as ourselves in the mode in which we conceive that He can be acted upon by the offerings of men. But there is a yet deadlier, because more subtle and ensnaring error in the more familiar conception of a priest, familiar at least to us Protestant Englishmen, as one who, in virtue of his official position and endowment, has a special and exclusive authority to administer Christ's ordinances, declare His truth, and take in His name the direction of souls. The Roman priest claims a more awful power. By the words of consecration he is able, according to the firm belief of the Roman Church, to convert the bread and the wine into the veritable body and blood of our Lord. That Church further holds "that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory," and that the Lord, "appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins." The Roman priest thus claims a vital power to move God's mercy to the communicants. It is really the crucifying of Christ afresh for them, and

the priest claims the power to offer or withhold the sacrifice. It hangs on his will at the moment whether the claim of Christ on the Father's mercy shall be urged on the penitent's behalf. It is a very awful blasphemy—a speaking evil of the redeeming mercy of God. But that is the pretension, and we cannot wonder that those who can win credence for that pretension, wield a tyrannous power over the human conscience and heart. One of the most remarkable instances of this tyrannous power is furnished in St. Bernard's life.

There was schism in the Roman Church—Pope and Antipope. Bernard adhered to Innocent II. Count William of Poitiers, the father of that terrible Eleanor, who first married Louis VII. of France, and then our own Henry II., took the part of Anacletus, and drove out Innocent's bishop, William of Poitiers, from his see. The matter grew very serious. The papal legate called in Bernard to his aid. The whole of Aquitaine was at that time in a most critical condition ; it was felt advisable to trample out the schism at once, and it was felt further that Bernard was the only man in Europe who could do it. Sick and weary, Bernard was dragged forth to Poitiers. He had a meeting with this obdurate Count William, and the account

of what transpired at the interview is not only in itself deeply interesting, but it affords a most valuable illustration of the nature of the power of the priest and the springs from which it flows. I extract Mr. Morison's account of it :—

“They all met at Parthenay. Bernard and Geoffrey dwelt on the division of the Church, and continuance of the schism. They said that, north of the Alps at least, Aquitaine alone remained a marked spot of disunion and disobedience. They insisted on the unity of the Church, and pointed out that whatever is outside of the Church,—as it were outside of the ark,—by the judgment of God, must of necessity perish. They bade him reflect on the fate of Dathan and Abiram, whom the earth swallowed up alive for the sin of schism ; and shewed him that God's vengeance on such crimes had never been wanting. The Count heard them very patiently, and replied that, as regarded the acknowledging of Pope Innocent, he had no objection whatever, they might be satisfied on that point. He was willing to renounce Anacletus ; but as for the restitution of the bishops whom he had expelled from their sees, he declared that nothing in the world should induce him to receive them again. Their cause might be good, and he gave his allegiance to it ; but the men themselves were hateful to him. They had offended him beyond forgiveness, and should never more be friends of his.

“As the Count appeared likely to be firm in what he said, Bernard broke off a discussion which was useless.

He, and those who might lawfully do so, entered a church to celebrate mass, leaving the Count standing outside at the door, which, as an excommunicated person, he might not pass through. Bernard went through the rite—the overwhelming miracle as it was thought—of consecrating the elements. Then rising into an ecstasy of enthusiasm and command, he came forth with flaming eyes and a countenance of fire, bearing the Host before him. Not with soft words of supplication, but in loud tones of anger and menace, he addressed the Count: ‘We have beseeched you, and us you have despised, an assembled multitude of God’s servants have implored you, and them you have despised. Behold the Virgin’s Son, the Head and Lord of that Church which you persecute, comes towards you. Your Judge is here, at whose name every knee shall bow, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell. Your Judge is here, into whose hands your soul will fall. Will you spurn Him also; will you despise Him as you have His servants?’ A silence as of death reigned over the assembled and terrified multitude, who, amid prayers and tears, waited in expectation of a miracle from heaven. The Count, when he saw the awful zeal of Bernard, in whose hands he verily believed at that moment was his Judge and Lord, stiffened and paralysed in every limb, fell insensible to the ground. Raised up by his attendant knights, he could neither speak nor see, and again fell with his face on the grass foaming at the mouth.

“Bernard came close to him, and pushing the prostrate man with his foot, told him to stand up and hear the judgment of God. ‘Here,’ he said, ‘is the Bishop of

Poitiers, whom you have driven from his church. Go and be reconciled to him with the kiss of peace. Lead him back to his see, whence you have expelled him. Give glory to God instead of contumely, and throughout your dominions restore that unity which has fled from it.' The Count heard, although he neither dared nor was able to speak; but he went at once and received the bishop with a kiss; and with the same hand by which he had abjured him, he now led him back to his church amidst general rejoicing. Soon he and Bernard were in friendly converse, and the latter urged him for the future to avoid such impious doings, lest at last he should tire out God's patience by his misdeeds."—*The Life and Times of St. Bernard (Morison)*, pp. 192–194.

This power, which Bernard wielded so terribly, the Church of England absolutely and earnestly disclaims. The language of the Thirty-first Article is as emphatic on this point as could possibly be desired.

"The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."—*Article XXXI*.

How completely the doctrine of this Article is being undermined by the subtleties of the writers of

the Ritualistic School, the following passages will shew:—

“The use, then, of these words—Priest, Sacrifice, and Altar—in connection with the Holy Eucharist, points to another aspect of that holy ordinance, perhaps not so frequently dwelt upon amongst us, but none the less necessary to be borne in mind, that we may not fall below the standard of God’s whole truth in our estimation of this exceeding mystery, nor fail to realize to the full the glories of our birthright and inheritance as members of the Family of God, the Church of the First-born, and of our share in its acceptable priesthood.

“Now the central and important word of the three is the word ‘sacrifice.’ On this the others depend. The ‘priest’ is a priest, as St. Paul says, because he offers ‘gifts and sacrifices;’ and the ‘altar’ is an altar because ‘gifts and sacrifices’ are offered upon it. (‘A sacrifice—*θυσία*—implies an altar—*θυσιαστήριον*.’—*Bishop Browne on Article XXXI.*)”—*The Church and the World*, p. 333.

“But ‘every priest,’ St. Paul says, ‘must have somewhat to offer.’ And what does CHRIST now offer, as our ever-living Priest in the Heavenly Temple? What but His own most precious Body and Blood, the one saving Victim to make reconciliation for our sins, and unite Heaven and earth in one?”—*Ibid.*, p. 337.

“The continual offering of a sacrifice, made once for all, does not necessarily imply any repetition, at intervals, of the same acts and circumstances whereby and where-with it was made in the first instance. A victim once actually sacrificed by death and accepted, may, if endued

with new and never-ending life, be continually offered—*i.e.*, presented, pleaded, brought into remembrance, before God. And this continual offering and presentation of a sacrifice once made, is itself a sacrificial act, and constitutes him who does it a priest, according to St. Paul's definition, 'one ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.' (Heb. v. 1.) The act of offering or presenting a victim is a sacrifice, though that victim be not, as of old, a new one slain on each occasion, nor yet the same slain anew on each occasion. It is a true Sacrifice, though the Victim be always the same, not slain anew, but offered as before slain once for all, and 'after the power of an endless life' possessing an abiding virtue for evermore. It is a Propitiatory Sacrifice, as pleading before God for all the successive generations, for all the several individuals, of the human race, the one only Expiation once made." —*Ibid.*, p. 338.

"So long as Christians practically look back with a mere historical faith across the gulf of eighteen centuries to the past fact that an Atonement was made on Calvary by a Saviour Who, having 'finished' His work, returned to Heaven, and was hid in the inaccessible glory whence He came; so long as they fail to realize how '*much more*' we 'who were reconciled to God by the death of His Son,' now 'being reconciled shall be saved *by His life*' (Rom. v. 10), and that His Mediatorial life, wherein and whereby He carries on His application of His 'finished work' to individual souls throughout the successive generations of mankind, has, through His HOLY SPIRIT, a real and efficacious manifestation in His Church on

earth as well as in Heaven ; so long as, on grounds essentially rationalistic at bottom, they doubt or disbelieve the reality of Sacramental grace, or of CHRIST's especial presence in the Holy Eucharist ; so long will they take a wholly inadequate view of Christianity, and fail utterly to realize either its glory, its grandeur, its efficacy, and its power, or the unspeakable nearness and blessedness of our relation to Him Who is its glorious centre ; so long will they fail to appreciate the majestic dignity of our Christian worship, and will misunderstand and denounce that reverent care about its minutest accessories, which to the full believer is but the natural and spontaneous expression of his faith and love, the unstudied outflow of an affection which truly believes in and thoroughly realizes, in His unspeakable tenderness and nearness, Him for Whose sake solely it is done, and without Whom it were worse than useless."—*Ibid.*, pp. 342, 343.

"All inferences, however legitimate, are in one sense afterthoughts ; and, of course, men had first to own a true presence of CHRIST's Body (under non-material conditions wholly different from those of a 'natural' presence) before they could argue from this to the presence of CHRIST Himself, Who, wheresoever and howsoever present, must be *recognized* as adorable and Divine. But what has to be shewn is, that any to whom sound Churchmen would generally look up, admitted a presence of CHRIST's Body, but denied a presence of CHRIST Himself claiming such recognition. Mr. Palmer, in his '*Treatise on the Church*' (vol. i., p. 401, 3rd edition, 1842), most clearly taught that 'as CHRIST's Divine and Human

natures are inseparably united, the English Church believes that we receive in the Eucharist, *not only* the flesh and blood of CHRIST, but CHRIST Himself, both GOD and man.' And this statement carries with it the principle of what is called 'Eucharistic adoration.' As Mr. Keble has said, 'My LORD, and my GOD,' sums up the matter."—*Ibid.*, p. 358, 359.

Words have no meaning, if such language as this does not tend directly to the revival of the Roman doctrine in the Anglican Church.

But I do not rest the argument on this point. When I speak of the priestly office as an idol, I do not refer simply or even chiefly to the sacrificial function which the priest is supposed to fulfil. The man who holds the power of the keys, no matter what form the exercise of the power may assume, is in fearful peril of becoming as an idol to the people. I fully believe, with eminent Anglican writers, that this idea of sacrifice is not fundamental, and that a man may be a priest, in a very strong sense of the term, who claims no such power, and who repudiates very strongly the Roman views. Dr. Hickes, a distinguished Anglican divine, who flourished at the close of the 17th century, and who was one of the Non-jurors, states in these terms the nature of priesthood and the function of a priest, in

his learned and elaborate work on the Christian Ministry :—

“ The common notion of a priest is to be a negociator between God and man in sacred things, as Moses was in civil He is their procurator, or proxy, to transact with Him, and His procurator to transact with them. He stands and acts as a mediator between both parties, as it were in the middle line of conversation, and in the very centre of conversation betwixt them. He limits and regulates the intercourse between them on both sides, as their common vicegerent.

“ To express myself about the common notion of a priest in other words, he is an advocate, mediator, intercessor, negociator, representative, vicegerent, mandatory, interpellant ; or, if there is any other word that will better express the force of the Hebrew or Greek words, or better suit with the honorable character and office of a priest, who by divine institution is to officiate between God and man, in their spiritual addresses to and negotiations one with the other.”—*Hickes, vol. ii., pp. 17, 18, Oxford Edition.*

I believe that he is perfectly right in his definition. The essence of the thing is there in the Anglican orders, whether there be any claim to offer, in a strict sense, a sacrifice or not. I take the office as Dr. Hickes describes it,* and I say that there, for the

* He elsewhere speaks strongly enough of the sacrificial function of the priest.—See *p.* 109.

mass of the people, not trained to the nice discrimination of scholars, you have a *thing*, an office, which inevitably seems to the worshipper to have the power of conveying the Divine blessing, irrespective of the question, whether there is a spiritual intercourse of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit, or not.

And this leads me to the main point, the orders of the Anglican Church. The fertile germ of Ritualism lies in that doctrine of the priesthood which is unquestionably the doctrine of the Church of England, and is expressed in her formularies with a clearness which nothing but the strongest theological pre-judgment could refuse to discern. The essence of the priestly poison, for poison I hold it to be, lies in the words of the Ordination Service: "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a priest, in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of His Holy Sacraments."

This language admits honestly of but one interpretation. Dr. Pusey is unanswerable when he insists that these words profess to convey, in the fullest

sense, to the priests of the Church of England the power of the Keys. Were I a Churchman, I should share the suppressed indignation with which he writes of the attempts which are made by Evangelical clergymen to modify their meaning, or to explain it away. There is no honest possibility of explaining it away. Dr. McNeile, and others, have done their best in that direction, by ingenious theories of a possible meaning, other than that which the Ritualist puts upon the words. The simple answer is, that the words were not used for the first time in Church history when the Prayer Book was put forth. For ages they had been employed in the Church of Rome, with one definite meaning. The compilers of the Prayer Book, in purging the Anglican office from what they held to be the errors and corruptions of Rome, retained these words. The conclusion is inevitable, that they believed in the thing which the words had always been held to signify, and intended it to be the doctrine of the Reformed Anglican Church. These words of Dr. Pusey, in a recent letter to the *Times*, seem to put the matter in the only possible light which can satisfy an impartial mind:—

“I will readily answer the ‘Layman’s’ questions, but

he, who has studied rather carefully the Roman doctrine of Absolution, might, perhaps, have saved some of them if he had first asked himself, 'What does the Church of England mean when she directs "her priests to move the sick person to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter,—after which confession the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort," and then bids us, in absolving them, to pronounce the words, "By His [our Lord Jesus Christ's] authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen"?' And this she does, having directed that, in our ordination as priests, our Lord's words should be used to us,—'Whose sins ye do forgive they are forgiven.'

"It is, of course, not a little invidious, when we believe ourselves to be simply obeying the Prayer Book, to be represented as claiming undue power for ourselves and the clergy generally, or when we ourselves confess our sins to other priests to be represented as desiring to gain power over others' consciences. We certainly observe our Blessed Lord's rule—'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.' We ourselves seek Absolution through special confession of our sins; we know its value by our own experience, as well as by the promises of Christ; we give to others, when asked, what we have ourselves sought from others and received. But this relates to our conduct as individuals. I will answer what I believe the Church to mean, but I could wish 'A Layman' to ask himself what he believes her to mean. The form of Absolution in the Prayer

Book she re-cast for our use ; she retained the characteristic words, 'by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee,' &c. 'A Layman' cannot think that we are not intended to use the words in the Prayer Book which the Church directs us to use ; yet our using these words in their literal sense is the ground of the charge of sacerdotalism. His questions require a theological treatise to answer them satisfactorily, but I will endeavour to answer them succinctly, without trespassing unduly on your kindness.

"Your obedient servant,

"E. B. PUSEY."

Let members of the Church of England ponder earnestly the truth, that the whole root of the mischief lies in that doctrine of priestly orders, which they are helping to establish and develope in the land. If the right to pronounce authoritatively these absolving words dwell in any body of Christian men, who are separated by outward and visible marks from the great mass of Christian people, those men are priests, apart from the question of sacrifice, in the sense which Dr. Hickes sets forth. And, further, the whole Anglican doctrine of sacrifice, confession, penance, and spiritual direction, becomes the most natural development in the world.

That this is the real core of the movement, a glance at the earlier numbers of the "Tracts for the Times" will reveal with convincing clearness.

The first Tract, the first germ of the movement which has now broken out into such flaunting forms, was entitled "Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission." On the second page of the Tract we find these words:—

"CHRIST has not left His Church without claim of its own upon the attention of men. Surely not. Hard Master He cannot be, to bid us oppose the world, yet give us no credentials for so doing. There are some who rest their divine mission on their own unsupported assertions; others, who rest it upon their popularity; others, on their success; and others, who rest it upon their temporal distinctions. This last case has, perhaps been too much our own; I fear we have neglected the real ground on which our authority is built—OUR APOSTOLICAL DESCENT.

"We have been born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD. The Lord JESUS CHRIST gave His Spirit to His Apostles; they, in turn, laid their hands on those who should succeed them; and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present Bishops, who have appointed us as their assistants, and, in some sense, representatives."—*Tracts for the Times*, No. 1.

This is surely very significant. The leaders of the movement knew perfectly well that at the very heart's core of it lay the doctrine of the priesthood.

It is the string on which they are always harping. Tract No. 74 is a long chain of evidences from the leading Anglican writers of successive generations, in support of the position which the first Tract lays down. The writers were perfectly aware that the very first step in the direction to which they were seeking to guide the Church, must be the reversal of the movement which had converted a sacrificing priesthood into a preaching ministry, and the re-establishment of the priesthood in full power and authority once more.

How large is the authority, how absolute is the lordship claimed, one or two extracts from the work of Dr. Hickes will shew. The first is quoted in the "Catena Patrum," Tract 74:—

“Can you, Sir, when you consider that Bishops are appointed to succeed the Apostles, and, like them, to stand in CHRIST’s place, and exercise their kingly, priestly, and prophetic office over their flocks; can you, when you consider this, think it novel, or improper, or uncouth, to call them spiritual princes, and their dioceses principalities, when they have everything in their office which can denominate a prince? For what is a prince but the chief ruler of a society, that hath authority over the rest to make laws for it, to challenge the obedience of all the members, and all ranks of men in it, and power to coerce them, if they will not obey?”—*Tracts for the Times*, No. 74, p. 33.

But this is by no means the strongest passage which they could find in his works. His third and fourth propositions run thus :—

“III. Christ, the archetypal eternal Melchisedec, is the King of this spiritual kingdom, Lord of this spiritual dominion, and supreme head of this spiritual corporation, and the Bishops as successors to the apostles are under Him, by commission derived from Him, spiritual lords, chiefs, and princes, as well as priests, in His spiritual kingdom ; to whom in their respective spiritual dominions and jurisdictions, He requires obedience of all His subjects, of what temporal rank or condition soever, as to His stewards, vicegerents, and ministers over His Church.

“IV. That the Church or incorporate body of Christians is by its constitution, a holy, royal or regal priesthood, as it is called in the Scriptures. First, because Christ, the head of it, is the archetype of Melchisedec, and as such a sacerdotal sovereign or royal priest. And, secondly, because this sacerdotal sovereign has committed the government and administration of His kingdom to ministerial priests, who, as I must often put you in mind, are the vicars, substitutes, legates, representatives, vicegerents of their royal sacerdotal Lord and Master in His kingly as well as His priestly office, throughout all the districts and dominions of His spiritual kingdom upon earth.”—*Hickes, Vol. i. 65, 66.*

Here is the living heart of Ritualism. The ceremonial is no more than its dress. It is the purpose and the influence of living men,

which lend the meaning to any form, custom, or institution ; and the deliberate meaning here is, The Christian minister is a sacrificing priest.

The influence of the priest on men in the long run, and on a large scale, is inevitably the idol influence. The priest has in all ages been the father of idolatries ; the prophet has been their destroyer. The priest lives—I mean his influence lives, (I am not thinking of the morsel of bread ; the morsel of bread does less in the world in great movements than many of us suppose), by the spiritual ignorance and helplessness of the people. The prophet lives by their emancipation and development. I dare not say that the world's priests are in all ages the conspirators against its liberties, and that their aim, as a class, is to draw away men's hearts from God, and to fix them on themselves. I believe, on the contrary, that men with a very high idea of their priestly functions, may be filled with an earnest and constant desire to bring their people near to God, but it is in a way that paralyzes the only approach that God holds to be vital, the drawing near to Him "in spirit and in truth." I can well believe that there is nothing which these Ritualists would more shrink from, than the idea that they are making their priesthood an idol, and are drawing

the hearts of men away from the living and true God. But this is no new delusion. Laban had a dread when he missed his idols, lest the presence of the Lord should have departed from his home; and Aaron had an idea that he was accomplishing an act of divine service, when, in the very sight of the splendours of the mount, and within sound of its thunders, he set up the golden calf, and led the song, "*These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!*"

Alas! some superstitious notion that we are doing God's work, is no security against our doing the devil's. It was a "*zeal of God, though not according to knowledge,*" which was driving the Jewish nation madly on to destruction in the days of the Apostle Paul; and there is no want of an earnestness, which may well be taken for spiritual, at the heart of the movement which is pressing on to the utter overthrow of all that has been edified of God in the Anglican Church. The principle of human authority in spiritual things, inevitably weakens and ultimately destroys that which is Divine. The man who stands for God, becomes as God, and ultimately fills the place of God. "Our Lord God, the Pope," is not the only sentence recorded in history which gives

awful warning of the practical Atheism in which the priest's authority must land humanity at last. The "Tracts for the Times" opened their message with "Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission." We have seen how earnestly the writer insists on the restoration of the priestly office and function, as the essential condition of the revival which he sought. Just a generation has passed since that Tract was published, and the principle has wrought mightily. It has leavened a large and powerful section of the Anglican Church. We will open the Handbook of Ritualism in 1866, and see what it has come to in the present day.

There is a remarkable essay in "The Church and the World," entitled "Thirty Years in the Church of England," to which I have already had occasion to refer. It is an autobiography, and has all the appearance of an honest attempt to lay bare the history of a soul, which has passed through the struggles and experience of the last generation in earnest sympathy with the Anglo-Catholic movement, and under the influence of its leading spirits. It is not the history of a very strong nature; nor are there signs of any great moral or intellectual power. But it is thoroughly honest, and the veil is completely withdrawn. It is evi-

dently by a lady of considerable culture, with many beautiful qualities, and with much quiet resolution in working out what seemed to her to be the true idea of the spiritual life—probably the kind of nature out of which good Abbesses were made centuries ago. The essay is a very important contribution to the volume, inasmuch as it unveils to us the experience, not of a leader, but of a disciple ; and it enables us to see how the spirit is beginning to work on those who submit themselves to the spell. The writer was evidently in close connection with, and under the explicit direction of, some of the leaders of the Tractarian party, and the revelation which “ An Autobiography ” affords of the tendencies of the system, even when it has to do with the high-minded and earnest, is very valuable, and may help us to forecast its influence when it descends into the lower spheres. I am about to extract some small portion of this history ; it reveals the first stage of the journey of those who hope that the priesthood will lead them into rest. What is the second and last stage, and what is the kind of rest in which that lands a soul, I may enquire briefly as I close.

“ About this time I learnt wisdom through some foolish experiences, and began to find my own judgment

not quite so infallible as I had supposed it, and also that I had been altogether getting careless and lax. Once more the thought of confession recurred importunately, partly from hearing of it, as so much resorted to by those who were really in earnest. Mr. Willis was a true friend, and, after much struggling with myself, I felt that I might perhaps manage to make a confession to one who had counselled me so often and so well. And so time had gone on till the autumn of 1849, when I was to pay a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Willis by myself. Then, I thought, would be the time ; and, having made, as I considered, sufficient preparation, I spoke to Mr. Willis about it. He quite agreed that confession would do me a great deal of good, but decidedly declined to hear me himself. Confessions, he thought, should not be made to intimate friends ; but, if I liked, he would write for me to a priest he knew in London, and get him to undertake my case. I had not contemplated this, but there was no drawing back ; and in a short space I had a letter from this gentleman, enclosing a book of directions for self-examination, which made me perceive that I had rather hastily concluded myself to be ready. I had not the most distant idea how a confession was made, and was too shy even to ask Mr. Willis much about it. I had a month for final preparation, and went to meet Mr. Goodwin, for the first time, in London, at the beginning of Advent. None of my relations had the least idea of my intentions, except one, who raised some doubts in my mind about acting without the sanction of my parents. But they did not much weigh with me. I was then no longer a child ; we had always been allowed a considerable measure of in-

dependence, and I felt too that the interests at stake were beyond any human interference, and that I alone could be accountable for my own soul. To have felt compelled to go to confession in direct contravention of parental commands was a conceivable possibility, but one to be avoided at all risks.

“I do not think I felt much apprehension then at the thought of the act itself, beyond ordinary nervousness. I believed I knew what my own part of it would be, and what I should have to say. So I went to meet my confessor at the appointed time in his large, dreary, London church, and after a short conversation in the vestry, he took me into the building, and left me for a while, according to the custom then in existence there, kneeling at the Altar-rail, until he returned in his surplice, and after a few prayers, took his place by my side. My confession occupied nearly six hours on two successive days—so long a time being necessary, in consequence of the imperfect preparation which, in my ignorance, I had supposed to be sufficient.

“Years have passed since then—days and weeks of severe suffering, mental and bodily; but never anything that can be compared to those hours, and the weeks that followed them, and I know that I can never pass through anything worse on the earth-side of the grave. My own history was comparatively soon told, and freely; but Mr. Goodwin was experienced enough to see that neither conscience or memory had been fully roused. I think he was more severe than he would have been, if he had not mistaken ignorance and nervous terror for obstinacy or evasion; but notwithstanding, I have not since met his

equal as a confessor, or ceased to be grateful for all he did for me. It was a terrible, but most necessary hour of self-revelation, and shewed me the evil of my life, as the preparatory self-examination had, strangely enough, completely failed to shew it me. We think that when the life is investigated, and memory taxed to its utmost, then the inner self stands completely revealed, and that the recital to another can add nothing to the knowledge of the past. Many persons think so, and that their sins confessed in secret to GOD are fully confessed. I believe it to be a most fatal mistake ; and that, brought up with a superficial knowledge of sin, as all Protestants are, the conscience of a person who has never been to confession probably has never been, and never will be, fully investigated. ‘Fully,’ after all, means but imperfectly, even when confession is over ; but yet I feel sure that the guilt of individual acts, and still more, the relative proportion of sins to one another, and to the whole spiritual life, can be known in no other way. And this accounts for the mass of careless, unspiritual Anglicans who neglect confession, and who avoid great sins, but never seem to make real progress in holy living. I, at all events, found out the mischief of my life then, undeveloped as my views were at that time, of the Sacrament of Penance. I looked upon the priest as a commissioned minister ; and I did not see that it was our LORD Himself to Whom I was confessing, and Who was speaking to me ; nor did I see, as I have seen since, that the confessor’s words are not his own, but that he is under the control of One Who regulates them in a way of which the priest himself is generally unconscious.

“I had gone to confession thinking myself rather a good

sort of young person on the whole, though I had none of the ideas popularly attributed to Catholics, that my own doings were of the least value in the sight of GOD ; but only that He had mercifully preserved me from great sins, and that His holiness would be accepted instead of mine. I went home with very different ideas of myself, wretched enough, but with a feeling of having been rescued from the brink of a precipice. The scene of the confession itself I could not venture to recall. It was months before I could let my thoughts return to it ; and even now I cannot dwell upon it without the shrinking with which, in after life, men recall a severe surgical operation, although they may also feel—as I feel—deep thankfulness for its results.”—*The Church and the World*, pp. 224-226.

“I know that the path I chose, which I trusted would have led to an active life of special devotion to GOD’s work, has carried me into regions of suffering and desolation, perhaps lower, perhaps higher, than those to which I aspired. I was directed to pray for serious illness, if what I had done in this matter was not in accordance with the will of GOD, and I have never been well since ; but I would not part with one day’s suffering now. It is not till we emerge from our entangled path on to the mountain-top, that we can see whether it is higher than the eminence we had intended to ascend. But that it has been *better* for me, whether higher or lower, I doubt nothing ; and I know now, that services offered as mine were offered, and accompanied with so much evil, could never have been accepted. But I knew nothing of this then ; and the life to which I had always looked forward seemed

about to be realized. A difficulty arose, happily only temporary, about the Sacrament of Penance, as administered by the priest who was to become my confessor. It is one of the many instances in which I feel that if temptation had not been mercifully withdrawn, I should probably have been led to compromise my principles."—*Ibid.*, p. 233.

Now I entreat you to measure the full significance of this. The belief that there is a spiritual authority between your soul and God tends inevitably to this result, to give over to that authority the "direction" of the soul, and the responsibility of the management of its spiritual affairs. And what does this "direction" imply? The voluntary laying down of all that can constitute the dignity, the glory, the joy, of a freeman in Christ Jesus.

"But," it may be answered, "do we not all seek direction from wisdom and experience? Is not our life a constant search after direction? For what do we read books, hear sermons, and frequent the company of the wise and good, but to get direction and strength for the way. And is there not an authority in the wisdom and goodness which help us; are we not so constituted as to recognize this authority, and submit to it; and is not the authority of the Church the completest embodiment of this guiding and directing power, which we can meet with in this world?"

Much of this is most true. We are always needing, and, in one way or another, we are always seeking direction, and whatever offers itself to us, with the evidence of superior wisdom and goodness, has an authority which I can call none other than the authority of God. But this authority, and the authority which a spiritual director claims and exercises, differ by a whole heaven. The one is a spiritual thing, the other is an idolatrous thing. The one gendereth to bondage, the other leads out to liberty. What is it that you really seek when you ask a man of superior wisdom and goodness to teach, advise, and guide you? You desire, surely, to be helped to judge wisely yourself in the matter under consideration. You desire light that you may see your way. You desire that facts and principles which you, in your weakness and ignorance, see but dimly, may be made plain to you by those who see them more clearly, in order that you may walk in the light of them. You desire that the wisdom and goodness to which you look up, may pass into you and become part of you; and that you, by communion with that which you feel to be superior, may rise in the scale of intelligence, may gain a new power of self-government and self-guidance, and be more able of

yourself to "judge that which is right." All help in the way of counsel, guidance, direction, which is worth anything, must be a help to us to see our way, must be a manifestation of light to us, making duty more clear to our intelligence and more attractive to our hearts. All other guidance but leads us deeper into the darkness in which we shall at last be lost.

But what is the state of mind in which one seeks the direction of the priest? Is it that we may have wise counsel, and be better able to see our way? Is it that we may have a higher power to form our judgments, and may become stronger to bear the responsibility of the guidance and government of our own lives? Or is it not rather a despairing cry—"Relieve me of this responsibility; I can bear it no longer, it is crushing me to the dust?" What was the kind of direction which this Anglican sought from her priest? "Tell me what to do," she said, "and I will do it as mere matter of obedience. I do not attempt to judge whether the direction is wise and right. I take its wisdom and rightness on trust from my director; the grace of guidance is his grace, the grace of unquestioning obedience must be mine. The less I see the reason of the course prescribed the better;

the submission will be the more absolute, the rest will be the more complete." There is no asking for wisdom in such a case, and there is no hope of attaining to wisdom. "The effort to guide myself," such an one says, "has wearied my spirit, and if I cannot find some guidance close at hand which I can rest upon, some authoritative direction which will spare me the misery of doubt about the path of duty, I shall faint or madden under the pressure of this load of life, and my existence here will be but one long pining for the hour when I can lay it down in death, and be free from the conflict and the effort, at any rate, for ever."

And what is this but giving up the battle of the Christian life in shameful, faithless despair? What is this but renouncing the freedom to which Christ has lifted us, and falling back, broken in spirit and bankrupt in hope, into that weary bondage which had fairly worn the world's heart out when the Deliverer appeared? And what is the next step in the process? Men and women "make their souls." That is, they place all that concerns their higher interests in the hand of a director. They have simply to keep him informed of their sins; it is his business to appoint the proper penances and keep the account straight with heaven. As in the

instance which we have just been considering, neither mind nor spirit are to be brought to bear on the transaction. The passiveness, that is, the pure unintelligence of the obedience, is its virtue. To have a judgment of our own about matters which concern our eternal woe or bliss is to imperil salvation. It is the priest's duty, whatever the difficulty may be, to arrange it for the penitent. If the matter be too grave, and above the measure of the priest's prerogative, the penitent must go to a higher authority. It will be more difficult, and will cost more, but the assurance will be more complete.

And this is the spiritual life of millions in Europe at this moment, and to this our religious life will inevitably be reduced if the Anglicans have their way. Then the time comes when men discover the limits of human help, and sicken as they see their idols fail. They have a vision of the awful mockery of a human authority in spiritual things which offers to stand in the place of God. And then they moan and madden in their anguish. They turn with bitter curses and fierce vengeance on their priests, and blaspheme the name of the God in whose pardons they affect to trade. And then—the wild fever-fit of Revolution, enshrining

in the Lord's temple the goddess of Reason, and alternating fits of sentimental devotion with orgies of furious lust or fiendish revenge. And then—the burnt-out crater of a volcano, black, horrid, cavernous, the most hideous image of desolation ; over which, after a long night of barrenness, God may begin to draw some tint of living greenness, whence may spring blushing flowers and golden fruit once more. But it is an awful history. And it is inevitable. Once set up man instead of God, as the director of your spirit, and this is the end to which your fate is set. There is no exception to it in history ; there is no escape from it in life.

But ye, brethren, are Christ's freemen. "*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*" The sons of God, the friends of Christ. "*Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.*" As spiritual, "*Ye judge all things, while ye yourselves are judged of no man.*" "*And all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*" And we—"not for that we have dominion over your faith, we are helpers of your joy, for by faith ye stand."

Sermon iii.

The Idolatry of the Sacrament.

*"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."—1 Cor.
i., 17.*



HIS is surely one of the most characteristic utterances of St. Paul. It falls perfectly into the harmony of his life. His whole interest was bound up with that which was capable of producing, by spiritual means, a spiritual influence on men. And this passage, sustained as it is by the whole spirit of the Apostle's writings, is fatal, as far as St. Paul's teaching is concerned, to the sacramental view of grace. To me it seems simply and blankly incredible, that if St. Paul had regarded Baptism as the one means of entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, he could have expressed himself thus. Nay, if anything in this world, in this universe, could have come into competition in his mind with the preaching of the Gospel as a means of spiritual influence on men, it is impossible that

he could have expressed himself thus. And when those who "seem to be somewhat" in the Christian Church, lament bitterly the revolution which has turned the clergy of the Church of England from a sacrificing priesthood into a preaching ministry, they or St. Paul must go to the ground. Both ideas cannot be right. One must destroy the other, and which is to survive and which is to perish, will depend entirely on the comparative strength of the Ritualists and of St. Paul.

We take our stand with the preacher of the everlasting Gospel, which will still be the joy of every creature under heaven when man's wranglings about theories of the divine life are for ever silenced, in the perfect knowledge, the open vision, of the Eternal World.

On the subject of the Sacraments, as on the subject of the priesthood, there have been two streams of thought and belief running through all the Christian ages; dividing the Church into two camps, of which the one is grander far and more imposing to the eye of sense; the other, we may well believe, if the Bible is to help us to understand the things unseen, is the greater in the sight of heaven. The men in the Church who believe in the Spirit, and the men who believe in the flesh, have been

related in all ages much like lonely but dauntless Micaiah, to Zedekiah and the four hundred prophets of his school. But Micaiah's line lives on. The lonely voice may be silenced, the lonely witness may be borne in a triumphant chariot of flame on high. But Elijah's mantle never fails to clothe his successor with a double measure of energy. The echoes of the solitary voice are caught ere they die, and prolonged with firmer, clearer tone, which swells louder through the ages till it utters itself by the lips of the Living Word, and establishes the power of "the truth" as the regnant power in the universe for ever. Elijah's word, Micaiah's word, was in truth Christ's word, and therefore the conquering word. The word of the schools, priestly or prophetic, dies; the word of the inspired preacher lives, because the Spirit of inspiration lives, and stirs in every faithful preacher of "*the truth as it is in Jesus*," from St. Paul unto the present hour.

The Priest is the idol of the conscience. His office is the thing which is not God, but which seems to fill the place of God, and to be the ordained representation of God, on which the conscience of man, groaning in its ignorance and infirmity, gladly rests. As Augustus Cæsar was to the poet of the Augustan age, indeed to the whole

Roman world, the "present Jupiter," so the priest in the Church is the present and tangible Christ. Dr. Pusey puts it clearly in the following passage in one of his letters to the *Times* :—

"In all we are acting by authority of Christ as His ministers and representatives. For He has said, 'Whatsoever ye loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.' We cannot hear His absolving voice from Heaven. He thus has appointed His ministers and delegates on earth to pronounce our forgiveness on earth in His name and by His authority. There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the Church of England, which bids us say, 'by His authority, committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins.'"

There is no formal denial, in the writings of this school, of the truth that the only spiritual guidance must be from God, and that the soul which is unguided and unhelped of God must stumble on in darkness, and fall towards the pit. No ! The arch-priest of Christendom says, "I am Jesus Christ with you in the world. In me His promise is fulfilled. It is His infallible truth which I utter, it is His irresistible authority which I wield, these are His keys which I bear. Through me He transacts all His affairs with your spirits, and in me you approach His mediatorial throne." In entire har-

mony with this the Anglican devotee, as we have seen, while submitting abjectly to a priest's authority, declares that "the priest has become her Pope, her vicar of Christ, the plenipotentiary of the invisible and distant Lord."—See the "*Church and the World*," p. 226.

The idolatry of the Sacrament, which springs naturally out of the idolatry of the priest, is the subject of the present discourse.

I. Let us try to get a clear idea of what the Sacrament originally meant, and of the stages by which the system of Sacramental grace grew up in the Church.

1. The "sacramentum" was originally the oath by which the Roman legionary bound himself to be true to his general and to his standards. And the first idea of the Christian Sacrament was, that the ordinances of Christ were bonds of obligation by which the Christian soldier bound himself to be true to his unseen but ever present Lord—once by the act of Baptism, which corresponded to the enlistment, and constantly by the Lord's Supper, which was a perpetual renewing of his vows. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into*

death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. vi. 3–11. “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For

as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."—1 Cor. xi. 23-29. Here is an act of man set forth as binding him by sacred obligations, making him Christ's sworn soldier, continually stirring up his loyalty and devotion by renewing the act of consecration, and setting fully before the eye of the spirit the claims of the unseen Lord. In the days of sharp, stern contrast between the Church and the world, when the worship of devils of cruelty and lust was the world's religion, and the disciples were a little unarmed company whom the iron heel of power was ever seeking to trample down, one can comprehend perfectly how the idea of military service was kept ever before the disciple's heart. He had to stir his loyal passion for his Lord—and it was a passion of which the faint image only seems to survive in these days—to face wounds, bonds, and death. Soldier-like, he

had to endure hardness and glory in it, if he might but win the martyr's crown. The memory of the hour of his baptism when he enrolled himself among the servants of the Lord, when he first grasped sword and shield and went forth to a conflict in which death was glorious victory, would be full of stirring associations; and every act of solemn approach to Christ, when he might be able in an especial manner to realize the near presence of the Saviour, would renew the sacred inspiring impression. He would go forth re-invigorated, and re-strung to renew that battle with the devil and all his hosts, to which he had vowed himself in the first act of discipleship, and in which it was his one prayer that he might be strong to fight on till death. Very beautiful and significant is the first vision which we have of a Christian Sacrament, of which a pagan has been the recorder :—

“They [the Christians] affirmed that they were accustomed to meet on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as to God, and bind themselves by an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge when called on to return it. When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate,

and then to come together again to a meal which they ate in common without any disorder."—*Plin. Ep.*, x. 97.

Would that it had ever been thus ! But then,

2. There is something behind this—the soul vowing itself to Christ ; the disciple acknowledging the Master ; the soldier, the subject, taking the oath to his Captain and his King. If man is able to vow himself to Christ, it is because Christ has first vowed Himself to man. If I can choose my Lord, it is because my Lord has first chosen me. If I can take service under my Captain, it is because my Captain has first called me and armed me for the war. And man finds this to be the only Gospel on which his soul can build its hope.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without Me ye can do nothing. If

a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. . . . Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.—John xv. 1-6; 16.

It is God's purpose in Christ which underlies all that is spiritual in our purposes. It is because the Lord *has* overcome the world that we can even dream of victory. It is because there is One "*Who is able to keep us from falling*" that we can "*gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" The Sacrament became the sign of that inner and higher spring of the life of the believing soul. Not alone of the soul's profession, but of God's election; not of its own energetic purpose, but of God's over-abounding, all-conquering grace. It became a conveyance from God to man, as well as a confession of man to God. Baptism was the sign of that act of the Sovereign Will on which the calling of the believer rests, and the Lord's Supper the sign of the conveyance of that Divine energy by which alone we can hope to

make our calling and our election sure. Thus far, well. The ordinances which Christ established unquestionably are intended to teach us something about Him and to promise something from Him, as well as to convey to Him the expression of our individual loyalty and love. But then the thing is independent of the Sacrament. It is there in Christ; and, like the Fatherly rule of our spirits, it has a thousand organs of expression, a thousand means of conveying the assurance of its abiding reality to the soul. That is a poor love even in a human spirit which has only one set form of words in which to express itself, which has not manifold modes of conveying its greetings and benedictions to its beloved.

3. The third stage of development looks towards the idolatrous use of the Sacrament.

The form gradually becomes so associated in men's minds with the thing that it is difficult to disassociate them. Baptism becomes the one mark of the covenant; the Eucharist, as it gets called, the one conveyance of the Divine Life; that great reality of which the ordinances are the signs, and which exists wholly apart from the signs, and is in no wise dependent on the signs for its manifestation to the soul, appears at length so blended with the signs that the one without the other begins to be

an impossible conception. Men actually came to put off their baptism till they were in the article of death, that the newly washed and regenerated soul might have no time to contract fresh taint before it passed into the presence of the Judge. They found it difficult to realize their adoption into the great Father's family, except as the sign might declare it ; and they felt themselves, in spite of the Living Word and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, wholly cut off from communion with the Divine Life, except when the visible elements were in visible and tangible contact with the bodily organs, and were converted by some enchantment into the actual body and blood of the Lord.

4. The last and complete stage of the idolatry is reached when the baptism of water is regarded as the indispensable condition of membership of the Kingdom, and the unbaptized are to the saints what the uncircumcised Philistines were to Israel ; and when " the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace " in the Lord's Supper, becomes a sacred mystery, into which the intellect may not venture to look.

A man bowing before the material elements is believed to have power by an incantation to change them into the veritable body and blood of the Lord.

He re-enacts the scene of the Passion. By mumbling a form of words he repeats the sacrifice of Calvary. Again the spear pierces, again the nails and the thorns rend,* again the bleeding Victim faints beneath the load of His great agony, and again the Father is moved, by the representation of the bloody sacrifice, to look pitifully on the penitents for whom it was offered, and for whom, we can hardly say *by* whom,† it was pleaded, and who, were that priest not there with his enchantments, would have no plea to urge on the tenderness, the compassion, and the love of God. The communicant eating Christ bodily is taken into a consubstantial fellowship with Him, which under other conditions would be impossible. And thus a bit of bread and a drop of wine, with a priest's benediction on them, have power to bring the kingdom of heaven into the possession of ignorant, faithless, and idolatrous hearts. And this is what the Sacrament comes to.

“Ritual is valuable only as the expression of doctrine, and as a most important means of teaching it, especially to the uneducated and the poor. It may be well, there-

* Those who care to look into the matter more closely will find in Picart's “*Ceremonies Religieuses*,” vol. i., pp. 76-86, a full and marvellous account of all that is meant histrionically by the action of the priest in the service of the mass.

† Unless the tinkling of a bell be an element of a spiritual act.

fore, at this time, to restate that great doctrine which is the true groundwork of the whole theory and practice of Church worship—the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The partial obscuration of this doctrine in our reformed Service Book (by way of reaction from certain popular superstitious perversions of it current in the later mediæval period) has doubtless been the principal cause of the inadequate notions on the subject of Church worship which have been, until comparatively lately, current amongst us.

“Until it is understood that Christian worship is really the earthly exhibition of CHRIST’s perpetual intercession as the sole High Priest of His Church, the sole acceptable presenter of the one worship of His one Body in heaven and in earth, and that as such it culminates in His own mysterious presence, in and by the Sacrament of His most precious Body and Blood, a stately and significant Ritual will, of course, be simply unintelligible, and, therefore, to English minds, intolerable. The Ritual will never be accepted, except in so far as the doctrine it expresses is understood and embraced; and it is very far from desirable that it should be.”—*The Church and the World*, p. 330.

“The doctrines involved in the pious endeavour to pay the full honour which the Church, when her own voice (distinct enough as regards the lights and the vestments at least) can be heard above the confused noise of the various claimants to represent her, expressly commands to be paid to the one great ordinance of worship which is of CHRIST’s own institution, are at bottom:—

“1. That of the Real Presence—the doctrine that

the Body and Blood of CHRIST are 'verily and indeed taken and received,' are, 'after an heavenly and spiritual manner, given, taken, and eaten,' in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that where His Body and Blood are there is He—there, as wherever else He is, with profoundest homage to be adored ; and

"2. As founded upon this, the doctrine of the solemn pleading before the Eternal Father of that once sacrificed Body and Blood for ourselves, and for 'all His whole Church,' as our only hope of pardon, reconciliation, and grace."—*Ibid.*, pp. 345, 346.

"Thus what the Christian priest does at the altar is as it were the earthly form and visible expression of our LORD's continual action as our High Priest in Heaven.

"As the most holy Body and Blood of CHRIST, the alone acceptable Victim to make our peace with GOD, are offered, that is, continually presented and pleaded, by JESUS Himself in Heaven, naturally, as we may say, and openly, so the same most holy Body and Blood are continually presented and pleaded before GOD by CHRIST's representatives, acting 'in His Name,' and by 'His commission and authority' (Article XXVI.) on earth. Here, however, this solemn action is necessarily performed supernaturally, in a mystery, under the veils of Bread and Wine, after no carnal manner, in no low material sense, but after a manner altogether heavenly and spiritual, and appreciable only by faith. It is performed, that is to say, in the same sense and after the same manner as He Himself performed it in the Upper Chamber, when He gave to His Apostles and their successors the command,

‘Do this in remembrance of Me.’ And this high mystery is wrought by the power of the HOLY GHOST, the great invisible Agent in all the ministrations of grace under the New Covenant.

“The earthly priest, then, no longer as of old the successor of a long line of dead predecessors in a merely typical priesthood, but the present vicarious representative of the one true, real, and ever-living Priest, now for a time corporally absent, acting ‘in His Name’ by the power of the HOLY GHOST specially conveyed to him in the gift of Holy Orders ‘for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God,’ does on earth that which JESUS does in Heaven. Rather we should say, according to that great principle which is the true key to the whole theory of the Christian ministry, it is JESUS Who is Himself the Priest, the offerer of His own great Sacrifice in both cases. It is the one Mediator acting in Heaven directly, as we may say, and immediately by Himself, acting on earth indirectly and mediately by His minister as His visible instrument, who, forasmuch as in that most solemn of all his duties he represents the priestly functions of his heavenly Master, is himself, for that reason, and for that reason only, called a ‘priest,’ whilst that on which this mysterious transaction takes place, that on which lie, veiled under the visible symbols, that Body and Blood which once for us were sacrificed upon the Cross, is called an ‘altar.’ In the strictest and most literal sense, ‘expiatory sacrifice,’ there never was any but that which was begun in the Upper Chamber and finished upon the Cross; ‘priest’ there never was nor could be any but

JESUS CHRIST; nor 'altar,' save only the Holy Cross. Still, because they have an important connection with, and relation to, those grand and unique realities which can be expressed in no other way, the Christian Eucharist being the solemn memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross and the present exhibition of CHRIST's priestly intercession in Heaven, is called a 'sacrifice,' its celebrant is called a 'priest,' and that whereon it is celebrated is called an 'altar.' We Christians, as S. Paul says, 'have an altar, whereof they had no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle,' *i.e.*, who, not believing in CHRIST, still clung to the worship of the Jewish Temple—an altar more truly so than ever was any in the carnal Jerusalem, though dedicated with the slaughtered hecatombs of a Solomon. 'And, indeed,' as Bishop Cosin has well said, 'the Sacrament of the Eucharist carries the name of a Sacrifice, and the table whereon it is celebrated an Altar of oblation, in a far higher sense than any of their former services did, which were but the types and figures of those services that are performed in recognition and memory of CHRIST's own sacrifice once offered upon the Altar of His Cross.'—*Ibid.*, pp. 339-341.

You will not fail to note how this falls into the harmony of the priestly idea of the ministry of the Church. "Every priest must have somewhat to offer." The full idea of the priest is the sacrificing minister. It is not essential to the conception of the priestly office, but it inevitably grows out of it. The man who is supposed to sustain the office of

the ordained negotiator between man and God, if his function could be supposed to end there, would be quite as fatal in his influence as the sacrificing priest to the liberty and life of the Church. But the idea of sacrifice enters necessarily into those transactions with God which man desires that a priest should conduct for him ; and the priesthood itself strains on to the complete form of the priestly function, and through the dogma of transubstantiation realizes it to the full. Transubstantiation grows naturally, inevitably, out of the idea of the priesthood which is cherished in the Roman Church. The revival of the high doctrine of the priesthood in the Anglican Church leads necessarily to the same result. Higher, more awful, power no being in the wide universe can claim—the power to offer to God the sacrifice of His Son. Nice distinctions, which may be drawn by subtle and trained scholastic intellects, vanish utterly when the thing is presented to the apprehension of the weak and the ignorant. This is what they believe that the priest is doing ; and it is the power to do this which the Ritualists are claiming, and the power of the thing when done which they are endeavouring to restore.

The man who is believed to wield this mysterious power, who is supposed to be able to make by his

own word the Sacrament of immortal life, and to offer it with his own hand to men—having power to give it and power to withhold it, power to bestow the Saviour on an agonising penitent, and power to withhold Him and to darken his sorrow into a great horror of despair—having in his control and handling at will the keys of hell and death—that man has a mastery over the souls of men more absolute far than any that the most arrogant secular despot can lay claim to, nay, than any that is wielded by the most idolatrous priesthood in the world.

For Christianity exalts and enlarges man's power in every way. The freedom of the free in Christ is the completest liberty, the bondage of the enslaved in the name of Christ is the darkest bondage known to men. There is nothing in any other region of man's experience so perfectly unquestioning, as the obedience which a member of a religious order renders freely to his Abbot, because he believes that Abbot to be invested with all the authority and all the claims of the Lord. A very masterly writer on these subjects asks, whence this idea of the power of the Abbot came into the world. He finds nothing in the principles of Christianity to suggest it, and nothing in the early constitution of the Church to explain it. He is

tempted rather to refer it to an imperial origin, and to consider that the Christians borrowed it from the slavish customs of imperial Rome. But the true origin is surely to be found in this idolatrous tendency of the human heart, the manifestation of which, in various forms, I am endeavouring to trace. The Abbot's authority is just the idol of the Lord's. Men obeyed him as submissively as they would have obeyed Christ had He been present, and they pleased themselves with the thought that this absolute religious submission to a man was a holy and acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. How unlimited and imperious that authority was, it needs but a slight acquaintance with the history of the Church to discover. And it could not be otherwise. If we once suffer that which is human to clothe itself with the right and the authority of the Divine, there is no limit to the tyranny which it will exercise on the one hand, and the abjectness of the bondage to which its subjects will bow themselves on the other.

A man assumes an awful majesty in the eyes of a guilt-tormented or dying sinner, when it is in his power by his own fiat as a minister of an ecclesiastical system which professes to hold Christ's sovereignty in fee, to give to him, or to withhold from him, his Saviour and heaven. The Abbot and,

in a measure, the "director" of consciences is the idol of Christ, the King—that is, the human thing which the faithless host set up and consecrate in the place of Christ the unseen Lord. The Mass is the idol of Christ, the Victim—the carnal thing which the faithless priests of a faithless Church set forth and consecrate in place of the ever-living and ever-present reality, "*The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.*"

I have spoken of the Mass. Ritualists are not afraid of even restoring the name.

"The Edwardian Church was neither afraid nor ashamed to use the old English word 'Mass' as a suitable, convenient, and, in those days, familiar term for the Blessed Sacrament. There appears to be little reason (apart from prejudice) why we should not again make use of the same word—where it may be employed without misapprehension and a breach of charity."—*The Church and the World*, p. 545.

How thoroughly the whole system is a return to the beggarly elements from which the Apostle did not dare to believe that the Church was free, the whole tone of their language and allusions reveals.

"A revival of weekly Communion would be, of course, a very great advance upon the degenerate custom of the present day. But we must never cease in our efforts

until the 'Daily Sacrifice' be restored to the Church of England."—*The Church and the World*, p. 535 (note).

"Holy Scripture and the Liturgy of the Church are the warrant for saying that it is essential to the realization of Objective Worship, that 'before' men's 'eyes, JESUS CHRIST' should be 'evidently set forth crucified among' them, (Gal. iii. 1); and that the mode of doing this is to be found in the fact that our LORD 'did institute, and in His Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that, His precious death, until His coming again,' to be made in the Sacrament of the Altar. Upon obedience to this Divine command, depends the Eucharistic manifestation of CHRIST, and, consequently, His real Objective Presence 'under the Form of Bread and Wine.'

"It seems to be not too much to say that, looking at the matter historically, this idea of Objective Worship, in connection with CHRIST's Eucharistic Presence, gradually dwindled down in consequence of the decrease of Celebrations of the Holy Communion from the later years of King Edward the Sixth downwards, and from the contemporaneous neglect of almost all that was calculated to adorn the Altar and to dignify the Service.

"It was the announcement of Malachi (i. 11), the last of the prophets, that 'From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place Incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering.' This having been accepted in the Church as foretelling the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is certainly one most forcible reason for striving to restore it again to its chief and proper

place in the Services of the Sanctuary. But, then, as the 'Pure Offering' itself begins to recover its true position, and to present before the sight of English Churchmen an objective reality, so it is specially fitted to draw out their devotion and to sustain their worship. It seems then, at least, strange to separate what the prophetic word combined, and to withhold the Incense which was to accompany the Offering, by pleading (how successfully may well be questioned) a non-literal interpretation in excuse for discarding a practice once no less common in the English than it now is in the Greek and Latin Communions; and never, as there is sufficient ground for believing, lawfully abolished from the public ministrations of the Church of England."—*Ibid.*, pp. 492, 493.

"Among our own theologians, Bishop Cosin (adopting very much the language of Calixtus' dissertation, *De Sacrificio Christi semel in Cruce oblato et initerabili*) writes as follows on this subject:—"Nor do we say it is so nude a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; but that by our prayers also added, we offer and present the death of CHRIST to GOD, that for His death's sake we may find mercy, in which respect we deny not this commemorative sacrifice to be propitiatory. (*Notes on the Prayer Book. Second Series. Works, vol. v., p. 336.*)"—*Ibid.*, p. 345.

Whither are we to turn to discover the original of this? Paul paints the picture in Hebrews ix. 1-5: "*Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was*

the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." There is their fountain-head of inspiration—"ordinances of Divine service and a worldly sanctuary;" though they miss wholly the spirit of liberty with which in its highest aspect, and as God meant it to be, the Jewish dispensation was charged. And were Paul among us now, think you that his stinging rebuke to the Galatian Church would not be heard ringing through the high places of our Christian idolatries: "O foolish Englishmen, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain."

I am anxious that you should see how, out of this

doctrine of the Real Presence, the whole Ritualistic system springs ; the doctrine of the Real Presence itself springing naturally, if not inevitably, out of the idea of the priestly office which is held by the Anglican Church. It is an effort duly to honour with material splendour the real bodily presence of the Lord.

“ Our LORD is adored as well as received in the Blessed Sacrament ; and, as a necessary consequence, we desire to surround His presence with all the dignity that elaborate ceremonial can bestow. The natural consequence of believing Him to be present there as He was in the streets of Jerusalem is, that we desire Him to abide with us always, so that our intercourse with Him may not be confined to one ‘ brief bright hour,’ but that the Tabernacle of GOD may be with men, and He be with them all days. So, like stars seen one by one on a summer evening, first in one church and then in another, His perpetual presence reappears among us, each additional tabernacle being the centre of untold additional blessing to us all. Prayer increases, and the direct and remarkable answers it receives almost induce me to believe that, before very long, such answers will assume a more directly supernatural character. But this cannot be without severer mortification than we have as yet practised, and which it is of no use to attempt in advance of the leading of GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT.”—*The Church and the World*, p. 247.

How it lays hold of the sentiment and the imagination this passage will fairly reveal :—

“ When I read the lives of the Saints, it seems to me that I do not know what repentance is—still less what faith is. But I am in the right way, I yet believe, even if so ; and the barren life that I live is the one best adapted by the Eternal Wisdom to my feeble powers. Could I possess higher privileges, I well believe that they would be of no use to me as I am. Did I not believe so, I might indeed be tempted to quit the English Church ; for the suspension of the Daily Sacrifice is to me almost the most serious departure from duty of which a Church and priesthood can be capable. But though I personally may suffer from it in this world and in the next world also, it makes no change in my duty ; for if God saw any other state to be right for me He could and would appoint it for me any day.

“ Until then, we must study so to live that some rays from St. Cyprian’s consolation to the Confessors who, by slavery and imprisonment, were cut off from offering the Sacrifice, may also enlighten us in our loneliness and desolation. For a life of penance is akin to confessorship, and may partake of some small portion of its blessings. I do not believe that our LORD’s Presence is as yet frequent enough in the English Communion to supply her with any but a feeble life ; and I am sure that as individuals we flourish and decay with the light or the absence of our SUN. Daily Celebrations, as they increase, will quicken the languid pulses of Divine life in souls that are unconscious of the blessing granted them,

and perhaps in those who are in their blindness ungrateful. We can be, at the best, but penitents : saintliness may be our hope for our children who have not their faith to unlearn, and whose early lives will not be always a remembrance of sin and of duty unpractised because not known."—*The Church and the World*, p. 244.

" But I cannot then know more surely than I know now the truth of the Catholic Faith, and that this alone is the truth as it is in JESUS. So I believe, in a few years, all that love Him will find. They will find too that however they may have loved Him and rested upon Him (as they may think) so far as it can be done in this life, they know comparatively nothing of Him until they have met Him and adored Him, and touched Him and taken Him home to their inmost souls in the Blessed Sacrament. Catholics know what it is to meet Him in prayer as Protestants do, and far beyond this, according to their degree of faith, what it is to meet Him at the Altar ; and they know that no comparison between the two acts can be made. Many hearts, doubtless, burn within even those whose eyes are holden ; but to know even as they are known is a blessedness of which they little dream. This Presence is the practical centre of Christian worship to a Catholic ; and there, after long unbelief, he sees the people of England once more gathering to adore the LAMB That was slain. Every day adds to the number, until those who at first might be counted by units find themselves surrounded by a multitude. ' In that day ye shall know that I am in My FATHER, and ye in ME, and I in you.' The work which

GOD is accomplishing in England by the Catholic movement is the blessed Sacramental union of souls with Himself, and He calls us all, for His love's sake, to share its toils and its triumph with Him."—*Ibid.*, p. 248.

The Ritualistic view of Celibacy completes the cycle not of Roman but of ecclesiastical corruptions, which this School is endeavouring to bring in and to establish once more in full vigour in our land.

"It is evidently regarded as a new creation of grace, a note of the kingdom of GOD, a fruit of His own Presence in the flesh, one among the Sacramental gifts in which the results of the Incarnation are manifested through the Spirit's indwelling power; a calling of GOD which implies a fixed disposition of the soul, sealing and consecrating the whole person through a willing and deliberate choice corresponding with the Divine predestination. Its permanency is involved in the terms employed. The contrast is drawn between it and marriage, which now, for the first time since its original institution in Paradise, is declared to be indissoluble. And in like manner Celibacy is announced as a perpetuation of our LORD's own likeness in following Him by a special vocation, so that His own virgin state should abide as a law of life in those whom He would draw to Himself by this bond of union. As a reflection of the life of our LORD it must needs be an abiding grace, partaking of His own unchangeableness, because an operation of His own Spirit, derived from His

own Person. Its permanence, therefore, in those who are thus specially called, rests not on their choice but on His election. It thus partakes of an enduring grace, sustained by an actual union with Himself, the Source of grace ; and is perpetual as the life of our regeneration, being in fact, a special endowment within the order of the regenerate life, and as undying, when truly His gift, as the grace by which we are preserved in a state of salvation."—*The Church and the World*, pp. 368, 369.

Well might the apostle, before whose eyes the great Apostacy was unveiled declare, "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving : for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.*"—1 Tim. iv. 1-5.

And now what does all this mean ? What is, spiritually, the outcome of it all ? What is the spirit which kindles this passionate desire to touch and taste and feed upon the elements, which, when the words of consecration have been uttered by priestly

lips, are held to be the vehicles of the corporal presence of the Lord? Is it anything else than the old idolatrous desire to get a pledge of the Divine Presence in the midst of us, which we can carry about with us, of whose nearness we can assure ourselves by sight and touch, and which we can worship on easy terms, as the present bodily form of God? What is this "daily sacrifice," this daily incense, this daily worship of the elements which are held to manifest the Objective Presence of Christ, but the nearest approach to the worship of the golden idol of which, in these days in Christian England, men may dare even to dream? We see in it precisely the same craving for a God within reach of our touch; who may bring home to us, through the bodily as well as the spiritual organs, that sense of satisfaction, rising even to intense delight, which springs from bodily contact with the friends whom we love.

And this accounts for the passionate fervour which is found in Roman and Anglican piety. It is the Lord whom they daily delight to handle, and whose bodily form is within reach of their embrace, whom they love with such passion, and on whom they exhaust the tender epithets and caresses which would be drawn forth by the presence of the most

beloved and familiar friend. This doctrine of the Real Presence means really a bodily contact with the bodily Presence of the Lord. It lends fervour and passion to the Catholic devotion, but we see, if we look at the matter steadily, that the spring of the fervour is in the sense and not in the soul. It is spurious, beautiful as it seems. It is born of, and nursed by a delusion, and, like all passion that is fed from a sensuous spring, it tends to exhaust itself rapidly, and then to die down into listless despondency deepening into black despair.

The saints who know these frantic fervours of devotion, the record of which fills us with wonder, and which in our coldness and deadness we are oftentimes tempted to envy, have their seasons of dreary, desolate, horrible darkness, when they are haunted by awful doubts about the reality of all unseen things, God, Christ, their own souls, heaven, everything but hell. Every true life has its hours of darkness, and the valleys alternate with the mountains of vision with all of us. But I believe that this special Catholic fervour generates seasons of terrible reaction in which the soul, all unstrung, is at the mercy of every foe. And what is worse, like all that is fed on delusion, it is, in the highest

sense, demoralizing, it weakens the moral vigour of the system ; it makes strong excitement essential ; it awakens a craving that must be fed in some way, and which, failing at last to realize this unreal communion with the Saviour, will seek to satisfy itself with any idolatrous garbage in His room.

You get a certain glow and fervour in idolatrous devotion, which you miss in intelligent manly piety ; but beware of it, its root is base, and the fruit it bears has no nourishment in it for mind or heart. It is a passionate sentiment, and not a loyal inspiring love. It haunts the atmosphere of gloom and mystery. It secludes itself in cloisters, and shrinks from the broad free daylight of living, struggling, and suffering men. It delights in the dreamy " hours " of a sensuous and splendid ritual devotion, while it contemns every bond, office, and duty of this life in its futile, flaccid effort to lift itself to the sphere which it vaguely fancies to be heaven.

With this sentiment, with the whole school, with the whole key of thought and feeling out of which it springs, Paul had absolutely no sympathy. His love for Christ, his longing for Christ, was as intense as any that man on this side the river of death can know. But this craving for a Real Presence in

material elements, his soul would have shrunk from and contemned as base and dishonouring. "*Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.*" The spiritual Presence to him was too real to endure this material mimicry. The future looked dark enough to him; we gather from his later epistles how his impression deepened with the years, that a long, stern struggle was before the principles for which he had contended with such strenuous and victorious effort. He knew that a great Apostacy was between the Church as he left it when he went home to Christ, and the final consummation; but perhaps the vision would have loomed darker still, if he could have foreseen that the time would come when bits of bread, transformed by a priest's benediction, would be accepted through the length and breadth of Christendom as the grand fulfilment of the Saviour's promise to the Church, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*"

I have spoken in this discourse of the Sacrament according to the Ritualists—as it is to those who believe, and who bring some measure of spiritual earnestness with them to their Communion. It is terrible to think of what it is to those who do not. To the intelligent Romanist the image of

Mary is at most but a help to what he believes to be devotion. To the ignorant it is an idol, in every sense in which the golden calf was an idol; it is itself the object of the only devotion which the soul has become capable of offering to the Supreme. These Ritualists take some earnestness with them to their celebrations, but to the ignorant multitude, whom they call in and whom they seek to gain by them to what they call the religious life, they are pure poison; they lower with slow but deadly certainty the vital pulses, and bury the soul at last, where the Pharisees were self-buried, in a depth of spiritual darkness and deadness which has a terrible likeness to the second death.

I believe that it is impossible to estimate the deadly mischief which the Anglican Sacraments, even in the milder form of the doctrine, have for ages been working in England. If the Ritualists are to have their way, the stronger poison will do its work with more swift and fatal certainty. The Life and the Light will fail together, and what is left of the faith and hope of our fathers will go down into a sensual and spectre-haunted night.

Sermon iv.

The Idolatry of the Word.

"Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."—John xvi. 13.

DOGMA is the idol of the intellect, just as the priest's "direction" is the idol of the conscience, and sacramental grace the idol of the heart. Dogma is the authoritative statement of doctrine. It is the settlement of matters of belief by human authority; the exact definition of what a man is bound to believe, concerning those things of which God has promised to reveal the truth to faithful and obedient hearts.* It is doctrine taken out of the charge of the Spirit of truth, fixed in a form of words, and imposed on the conscience of mankind. And there is that in man which disposes him gladly to accept and rest upon this idol of the truth, and spare himself the toil and anguish of a spiritual search for the truth itself,


* John vii. 16, 17.

which He who *is* the Truth alone can unfold. Man is made capable of seeking that satisfaction concerning truth, which the knowledge of the Lord of truth alone can afford ; but man is prone to content himself with a lower satisfaction, the satisfaction of thinking that he has found the truth without search, and has passed, not by the long way of the wilderness toils and battles, but by a short and easy path to the promised land.

We have seen already how the conscience of the weak and bewildered pilgrim of life—like those children of Israel out in the wild wilderness, with a dread unknown waste all round them, and no leader in sight—cries out for some visible guide. “ Tell me whom I must obey, give me some visible, tangible leader ; the pressure of the burden is too great for me alone, let me feel some stronger arm close by me on which I can lean, some stronger will on which I can rest. Give me my priest, and let him be to me in the place of God.” The heart too cries out for its carnal satisfactions. It wants something at hand, within easy reach, to which its deepest affections can cling, and by which its yearnings for Divine communion can be satisfied on terms easier to its indolence than those which are proposed by the Lord. So it transforms Christ

into sacramental bread and wine, and then, partaking by the bodily sense of the mystic food, it delights itself with the thought that in that very act it is receiving Him to the nourishment of the inward life. The intellect too must have its idol, its satisfactions on easier terms than those which are proposed by Christ. It desires some form of words set forth by an authority to which it can submit as Divine, which shall satisfy its craving for the knowledge of the things of God, and which shall offer some authoritative settlement of the questions which threaten to keep it in constant tormenting strain through life. "Tell us," is the cry of man's idolatrous nature, "whom we are to obey, tell us what we are to do, tell us how we are to believe, that we may enter into life."

The demand for dogma, authoritative statement upon matters of faith, never fails to attend a Ritualistic revival. The kind of rest from the effort of the spiritual life which the Ritualist craves, involves necessarily some arrangement by which he may be saved a too anxious thought about spiritual things—a too difficult and responsible exercise of his own independent intellectual and spiritual powers. He asks his priest to lift a burden which he finds too heavy to bear from off his



spirit, the burden of choosing his own way and accepting before God the responsibility of the choice. And he asks the Church by its dogmatic teaching to relieve him of the burden of spiritual judgment, that searching of the deep things of God to which he is called in Christ. Then he feels himself free to yield himself up to that dreamy sacramental communion with the Saviour, the very basis of which is a figment of the imagination, and the indulgence of which must end in an utter overthrow of all spiritual intercourse between the soul and the heavenly world.

The Bible is not a book of dogmas. Whatever it is, it is not dogmatic. There is no creed in it, and there is no authoritative statement of articles of belief, by assenting to which a man may assure himself that he holds the whole Catholic faith. And the least dogmatic part of the Bible is that which is the heart's core of it—the teaching of the Lord. The Anglicans are thus far quite right in the answer which they make to the challenge, to set forth the Scriptural authority of the doctrines which they maintain, and the usages which they employ. They plead that there is no formal Scriptural authority for many of the most central doctrines of the truth, and the most universal ordinances of the Church. There is no dogmatic

statement on the subject of the Trinity ; and the baptism of infants rests not on explicit commandment, but on intelligent deduction from historical statements, and a consideration of the whole spirit of the word of God. Not by the mere letter of the word, but by the spirit of the word, they have the right to be judged, and by the spirit, yet more sternly than by the letter, they are condemned.

History and exhortation compose mainly the substance of the inspired word. The doctrine has to be precipitated from the history and the exhortation, by the potent chemistry of the intellect. But God has not separated it. He has left us to extract it. We have to study for ourselves what must be behind the history and the exhortation, and state it to ourselves in the clearest form we can ; always remembering that the statement is smaller far than the reality which it professes to expound, and that statements of truth differing very widely from each other may help to the setting forth of a reality which is greater than them all. The Church has rebelled against this want of dogmatism in the Bible. Full of the idolatrous desire to find some spiritual resting-ground on *things*, instead of on the living God, as the Spirit may take of the things of God, and shew them to

the spiritual faculty of man, it has fused the ore of Scripture into the metal of doctrine, and then, much as Aaron made the golden calf, has cast it into rigid forms of dogma, whose mere rigidity it mistakes for the force of life. It has thus frustrated the very purpose which we know that the Lord had in view, in giving neither a code of laws nor a chain of dogmas, but a living history, as His Gospel to the world. What, in truth, is Church history, but the history of the struggle of man's idolatrous heart against the spiritual ideas and methods which fill the whole field of Scripture, and the endeavour to establish a formal and even material means of access to the Lord in their room. How not to believe in that which is spiritual in the Bible, and how not to live out its spirit, is apparently in all ages the main aim of the great organizations which call themselves by the name of Churches, and set themselves forth as the authorized organs of the Lord of the Church in His communications with the world.

A great argument of the Ritualists, and those who believe in the power of authoritative statements of doctrine to give rest and stability to the Church, is the fact of the endless controversies and schisms of the Protestant Churches, that is, of the

Churches which believe in liberty. Adopt the principle of liberty, they say, and endless tormenting discords will be the inevitable result. It is no answer to this to say that, if you adopt the principle of authority, you have discords as endless and tormenting. Quite recently there has been a brief but sharp conflict between, perhaps, the two most eminent and influential men in the Anglican Church, both of whom believe firmly, not only in the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, but also in the advantage which such a dogmatic statement on authority may afford to the perplexed. The controversy at length issued in the statement on the part of one of the eminent and learned disputants, that he and his opponent did not "believe in the same God." It is a striking lesson on the function of authoritative statements in settling the fundamental articles of belief.

But though this might afford a good controversial answer, spiritually it is worthless. An answer which aims no higher than the silencing of an opponent, is worth nothing in a Christian sense. The soul wants rest, and not a choice of discords, or else despair because there is no choice—because it is all discord and for ever. Is there any principle of rest, is the real question. Is there any possibility

of coming near to the reality which is the same in all ages, in all worlds, through all eternity, the truth of God? Can we come in any measure into direct contact with the mind of God, and know Him with that knowledge which, while its conditions may perplex the intellect, has a full satisfaction for the spirit, the knowledge which a friend has of a friend?

God forbid that, in speaking as I feel bound to speak, in severe condemnation of a theory, which proposes to man a kind of rest from speculation which is but the prelude to longer and more terrible mental and spiritual torment, I should appear to speak lightly of the difficulties of belief, and of the anguish of doubt. It is not seldom the pressure of desperate perplexity, which drives the men who in the higher sense have made shipwreck of faith, to rest on the dogmas of what they believe to be an infallible Church. Doubt is the soul's chamber of horrors, and there is no complete escape from it. As I once heard a great thinker and a great believer say, as the circle of light widens, the circle of darkness beyond it widens too. The universe is very large, very deep, and very full of mystery. As our vision of it widens our sense of its mystery widens, and questions force

themselves on us and threaten to strangle us, which have not as yet appeared on the horizon of those who have never attempted an earnest independent exercise of their powers. The possibility of the existence of such a Being as we are taught to believe in, seems to grow dimmer the more deeply we pore over it; nor does thinking resolve for us the mystery of the problems of Freedom, Providence, and Immortality.

There are few probably who have ever in any high sense thought at all, who have not seemed sometimes to pass into a horror of great darkness, as the questions, How all things came to be, how God came to be, how God can rule and yet hold us accountable, how sin can be sin, and yet, in the very act of working out its malignant will, yield the highest and most lasting triumph to grace, have pressed their dilemmas on the spirit. Earnest thinkers have to wrestle for bare life with doubts which, like knotted serpents, writhe round them, crush their limbs, twine round their gasping throats, and spit their poison on to their livid lips—doubts which aim at the heart of all their highest and dearest beliefs, and which so press them that, in the very bitterness of despair, they are tempted to give up the conflict, and let the Epicurean have his way.

Very terrible is the discipline through which a man who cannot "rest in the Church," must pass on his way to an assured belief. But is there any other way to a man's satisfaction about anything? Is not the shadow of the Cross everywhere? Do we escape the Cross by refusing to look at it? Do we not rather postpone the vision to the day when eternity will press it sternly and awfully on our sight, and we shall shrink from it with horror and dismay?

The searching the deep things of God, through perplexity, and doubt, and dread misapprehensions, is a spiritual exercise of the loftiest and most arduous strain. It is but partial comfort to be told that the same perplexities attend on every effort of man to supply to himself the place of the spiritual teaching of the word of God. We need to see the end of perplexity, to be sure that there is a method which will extricate us from it at last. The real question is—Is there any faculty of man the honest exercise of which will help him through the difficulty, and will make it possible for him to hold with strong individual grasp the essentials of belief; or must he give up all exercise of an independent judgment, fold the wings of his quest, say that he believes what the Church authorizes him

to believe, and thus enter into a rest, which they call in heaven by the darker name of death?

It is, then, with no light view of the misery into which doubt may plunge a human soul, that we refuse to accept the kind of rest to mind and spirit which is afforded by the authoritative dogmatic statement of truth. We cannot recognize the authority of the men who profess to have commission from God to make that statement, still less can we solve the problem by believing *explicitly* what we can comprehend of the statement, and *implicitly* what we cannot. But we agree with them profoundly that deliverance from doubt is one of the grandest deliverances which God Himself can work for the human soul. We only hold that the enfranchisement must begin with deliverance from idols, and most especially the idol of dogma, which is set between the mind in its spiritual activity, and that which alone can satisfy the mind, the truth of God.

Nor, on the other hand, do we reject the authoritative teaching of the Church as the one arbiter of controversies and guide to a settled faith, because we attach but a secondary importance to an assured and intelligent belief about the things of God. Sound belief and sound living in the long run and

on a large scale inevitably go hand in hand. There is a philosophy very current at present and very popular, which denies that man can attain to any intelligent satisfaction of spirit concerning the realities of the unseen world. We are told that they are mysteries which lie altogether beyond his sphere. All that he thinks that he knows about them is the dream of his own imagination, the image which he has made himself, and which he has no means of comparing with the truth, if there be any such thing as truth in the sphere which is beyond his sight. From this point of view a man's beliefs or notions about things with which he has no means of bringing himself into contact, are quite unimportant; they are but tentative efforts which can have no results, and tend rather to distract his energies from the region in which the results are tangible and sure. Moral sincerity, uprightness, earnestness, are, in this view, the vitally important elements in life. And surely they are of supreme importance. But the real question is, how are they to be kept alive and nourished within?

Mere earnestness can do much, in connection with beliefs which wander far from the pole of truth. There have been great and wonderful reformatations and revivals, under all systems of

belief; among which the revival consequent on the establishment of Buddhism in India is worthy of special study, with intelligent perception of both its likeness and its unlikeness to Christianity. But the great revival, the resurrection of humanity, the renewing of the life of the world, the renovation which has endured, and has expanded, and absorbed into itself all secondary streams of effort to elevate and purify the life of mankind, was begun and carried forward by men who had a very definite belief in "Jesus and the Resurrection," and who held that faith to be essential to any high and fruitful service of man or of God. A very clear and strong belief concerning unseen things was the special characteristic of the men who led, and the men who have sustained, the mightiest movement which has ever influenced society, and which constitutes the crisis in the history of the world.

Would it be possible to repose the same confidence in the moral integrity and earnestness of a people who had no sort of belief in the spiritual world, in God's truth, God's righteousness, and man's moral freedom, which might be reposed in a people whose belief in these things was so profound that they would rather suffer persecution, expatriation, and death itself than say a word or do a work

inconsistent with their faith? Could one trust a company of avowed Atheists, as surely as one might have trusted the Pilgrim Fathers for instance, that they would be true to their word, be generous, patient, and self-denying, and keep a noble aim before them in life? And if the faith of a nation in the Living God is visibly, generation by generation, decaying, does it surprise us, or is it in entire harmony with our almost necessary convictions, if we find their manners and morals steadily deteriorating too? And what is true in extreme instances and on a large scale, the scale of nations, is true also of societies. The Chinese have no faith, and they are, therefore, nationally and personally what they are. The English under Elizabeth and under Cromwell had an intense faith, and therefore they were what they were, and we are, in no small measure, what we are this day. Man is made to know and to love, to know that he may love, and love that he may perfectly know. If a man's mind be idle or hopeless about the truth, his spiritual hold of it will be feeble. Tell him that it is a mystery which he cannot penetrate, that the true attitude of his intellect is quiescence, or rather acquiescence in its hopeless helplessness, and thankful reception of such forms of words as it may

accept on authority, as the most perfect images of truth which in this world it can know—and the spirit, missing the living help of its handmaiden, will grow careless, indolent, and hopeless, and fall inevitably under the priest's direction, while the intellect rests on dogma as on truth.

God is to us, as a friend is to us, as the great world is to us, something to be observed, known, and loved. We must know a man that we may love him. We must study the world that we may delight in it. We know a man but in part, we know the world but in part, but it is a real, intelligent, satisfying knowledge. The effort to know is not hindered, save in the very weakest, by the fact that we are often quite baffled, often quite miserably deceived. We have no better means of satisfying the just craving of our being than by trying again. If our senses deceive us, or the mind deceives itself in the interpretation of their notices, we have nothing better to help us than those same senses exercised under higher care; we can but repeat the effort under conditions which we hope will conduct us to more sure results. And it is thus with the higher knowledge—the knowledge of beings. I have a real and valuable knowledge of my friend, though there is much in him that I do not know. I know

the solid worth of him, I know the things which I love in him, and which make him attractive; because I find them in him I am attracted by him, because I miss them in others I am repelled. There may be something in vital attraction, that which lies at the heart of love, which is inexplicable, and which we can never fully comprehend. But it is in the harmony of what we do know; we are led up to it by what we can understand; the more we know of it by experience the more luminous does it appear to us; so that our progress in the knowledge of the mystery, but prepares us to believe in the vision of the state when we shall "see face to face, and know as even also we are known."

In God too there is that which I can know, which I delight to contemplate, and which exerts an attractive influence on my spirit. There is that also which I do not know, which I cannot know, which I shall never know, through eternity. But I am conscious that each act of fellowship leads me more deeply into the knowledge of the mystery. It is a mystery which is full of light and not of gloom. The eye that trains itself for the light sees more clearly daily. It meets ever with fresh satisfactions. It sees more and more of what it has been taught of God to delight in and to love. Its horizon of know-

ledge is constantly expanding ; as the light within burns brighter the circle of the mystery which has ceased to be mystery widens, God comes into clearer vision, and we are able to trace more perfectly the convergence of those attributes which meet and are one, in that of God which is beyond our finite sight. And for this knowledge, a knowledge which enables him to walk in the light, man was made. Without it he is restless and distressed, as a flower shut out from the sunlight far back in a dull room. And if through faithless fear he is kept back from that spiritual knowledge, the result will be inevitably a weakening and dwindling of his spiritual life.

Let us be sure that what a man believes about God and things unseen is an element of incalculable importance in the formation of his character and the conduct of his life. Sound belief is as needful to the vigour of a godly life, as sound bone is to the firmness and fruitfulness of the bodily frame. Religious sentimentalists, who live in a dream-world of their own, but little in contact with the firm world of reality which is represented in the kingdom of truth and righteousness set forth in the word of God, lack bone, and cartilage, and muscle, they are the mere Radiates of the spiritual sphere. They must get faith, they must meet God in His word,

they must ask of the One Master and Teacher, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to believe and to do?" they must acquaint themselves with Him, and have knowledge of His mind and will, if they are ever to rise to any measure of the fulness of the stature of their manhood, and realize the higher joys and glories of their being—the power to become the sons of God.

We sympathize, then, very earnestly with the Anglicans in their dread of doubt, and in their conviction of the high importance of a clear and realizing apprehension of the facts and truths of the spiritual world. We differ with them absolutely as to how such settled faith, if it is to be at all worthy of the name, is to be gained. We insist that it is truth which man needs, and not submission to inevitable ignorance—the knowledge of the Being who is an infinite mystery, and not the knowledge that He can never be known. And we say that it is but to mock, and ultimately to madden, men to tell them that they must rest on such partial and fleeting glimpses of His nature, attributes, and works, as ordained teachers are able to seize and fix for them, in words that can be handed down as "the tradition" from generation to generation; which tradition, being fixed and formal, contains within its

narrow limits—and narrow they must be compared with the truth—all that man may hope to know about the deeper relations of his being and the Living God. Let me quote to you some remarkable words of Archbishop Bramhall, written more than 200 years ago, which seem to me to set forth this “idolatry of the word,” in its completest form:—

“I do implicitly and in the preparation of my mind submit myself to the true Catholic Church, the spouse of Christ, the mother of the Saints, the “pillar of Truth;” and seeing my adherence is firmer to the infallible rule of faith, that is the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church, than to mine own private judgment or opinions, although I should unwittingly fall into an error, yet this cordial submission is an implicit retraction thereof, and I am confident will be so accepted by the Father of mercies, both from me and all others who seriously and sincerely do seek after peace and truth.

“Likewise I submit myself to the representative Church, that is a free general Council or so general as can be procured; and until then to the Church of England, wherein I was baptized, or a national English Synod. To the determination of all which, and of each of them respectively, according to the distinct degrees of their authority, I yield a conformity and compliance, or at the least, and to the lowest of them, an acquiescence.” —*Archbishop Bramhall's Preface to Reply to the Bishop of Chalcedon*, vol. ii. p. 22. *Oxf. Ed.* Quoted and adopted by *Dr. Pusey, Letter to the Bishop of London*, p. 266.

These words are the more significant for our present purpose, inasmuch as Dr. Pusey quotes them and stamps them with his approval. Elsewhere, in his own words, he develops the idea after the following fashion :—

“ We acknowledge that Holy Scripture is the source of all saving truth ; but it does not therefore follow that every one unguided is to draw for himself the truth out of that living well. The Sixth Article lays down the duty of the Church as the groundwork of every subsequent statement of doctrine. It says nothing of any right or duty of every or of any individual to satisfy himself that every article of the Creed can be so proved, much less of any liberty of any one to reject what *he* cannot so prove. It is often the very condition of retaining faith altogether, to continue, even for a long time, to believe without seeing, even if, with all the diligence a person can use, he cannot see the proof of an article of faith. This, especially with the young, will be the point of divergence, of which one side will end in a perfect intelligent belief, the other in total unbelief. Such rejection of one point has ended in atheism, for it was the resistance to the grace of God and trust in self. The very existence of Creeds side by side with Holy Scripture—summaries of its teaching, yet not identical with it, capable of being proved by it, yet received before it and independent of it ; made ours in Baptism when we were unconscious ; rehearsed in our names as our belief ;

taught without doubt or faltering as the truth of God as much as the Holy Scriptures themselves; inworked into our spirit by devotion, day by day made part of our very being, by being spoken to Almighty God—shews that we were not meant ourselves to have any choice as to our faith. And this is apart from the very awful sentences with which the Athanasian Creed is fenced, that we ‘hold,’ *i.e.*, retain faithfully the Catholic faith which we have once received. The very name ‘*the* Catholic faith,’ ‘*the* Catholic religion,’ ‘*the* Christian verity,’ by ‘which we are compelled to acknowledge’ what is in accordance with it, and ‘forbidden to say’ what is contrary to it, shews at once that in the belief of our Church, which has received this Creed, at least the whole doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the person of our Redeemer, as well as the rest of the Apostles’ Creed, everlasting rewards and everlasting woe, are to be believed very exactly, without the slightest appeal to our minds, or any scope for private judgment.”
—*Pusey’s Rule of Faith*, pp. 4, 5.

Now let me say at once that there is something here with which I entirely sympathize. If, as we sometimes seem to imply by our mode of talking of it, the right of private judgment means that a man is absolute lord and master in the sphere of his own belief, and that what he believes, is *his* truth, which he has precisely the same right to hold as any other man has to hold any other truth, then so far the

Anglicans are right. This is the principle of confusion, and nothing but confusion could grow out of it. Thus far I should agree with them ; I should only differ with them in thinking that there is a shorter way out of it all than by the acceptance of dogmas on Church authority ; and that is ; by giving up the pretence of believing anything, in any high sense, at all. No man has a right to believe anything but THE TRUTH. The God who made him capable of knowing the truth, and incapable of living a true man's life without the truth, binds him to seek the truth by the most sacred obligation. And He bestows on him the full liberty of search, the right and the power of individual judgment, to the end that he may come to the knowledge of the truth, and to that end alone. Unless, as even pagan Seneca saw, "a Divine Spirit dwells within us," communing with our spirits, and making the truth a living reality to those spirits, working it into the vital texture of our lives, then our right of private judgment is but the right of choosing the fool's baubles that we will play with ; it matters little in that case whether we find them for ourselves or the Church finds them for us. Belief, to which a man has not attained for himself under the guidance of the Living Spirit—using thankfully all the helps

which man's thoughts, whether expressed in Creeds or otherwise, can afford to him, but retaining the right and maintaining the duty of judging what is helpful and what is not—is nothing better than an idol, and all assurance of faith which rests on no firmer basis is a delusion and a snare.

There is just one word in Dr. Pusey's statement on which I would fix your thought. It is a little word, but its presence or absence makes the difference of a whole heaven—"Unguided." "We acknowledge that Holy Scripture is the source of all saving truth; but it does not therefore follow that every one *unguided* is to draw for himself the truth out of that living well." Unguided! What profound unbelief is here! It is the root of all idolatry. We have seen how the soul, not believing in a Father's rule, sets up a priest or pope to fill up the void. We have seen how the heart, not believing in the spiritual presence of the Saviour, imagines and then worships a tangible bodily presence in its room. See now how the harmony completes itself. The mind, not believing in the power of the Spirit of Truth to guide it into all truth, falls back on the authoritative teaching of a human conclave, and says, This dogma is the nearest approach which I can hope to make to the heavenly realities of truth.

Let us hear what the dogma saith, after what manner it seeks to inform and edify the soul :—

Whosoever will be saved : before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

Which Faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled : without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic Faith is this : That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity ;

Neither confounding the Persons : nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son : and another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one : the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son : and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate : and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible : and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal : and the Holy Ghost eternal ;

And yet they are not three eternals : but one eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated : but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty : and the Holy Ghost Almighty ;

And yet they are not three Almightyies : but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God : and the Holy Ghost is God ;

And yet they are not three Gods : but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord : and the Holy Ghost Lord ;

And yet not three Lords : but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity : to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ;

So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none : neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone : not made, not created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son : neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons : one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other : none is greater or less than another ;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together : and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid : the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved : must thus think of the Trinity.—*Athanasian Creed.*

And now turn to the Acts of the Apostles, and see what Christian teaching is. Read Acts ii. ; iii. ; x. 34-43 ; xiii. 16-41 ; and make the comparison for yourselves. Unguided ! Again I say, what a world of unbelief these words reveal. They were no wise and mighty men, no deep scholars in the mysteries of the kingdom, to whom the Lord declared, "*Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.*"—John xv. 15. Nay, they were enemies, bitter enemies of the truth, of whom our Lord demanded sternly, "*Why do ye not of your own selves judge that which is right ?*" They were but recent and ignorant converts, hardly emerged from Paganism, to whom Paul addressed these solemn and searching words : "*But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which*

man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth ; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him ? But we have the mind of Christ."—1 Cor. ii. 10-16. And it was of every one who should believe on Him through the preaching of the Apostles, and of their successors, the faithful preachers of the truth in all ages, that the Lord prayed—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as We are one : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."—John xvii. 20-23. Yet the Anglicans tell us that there is no guidance for such in seeking to know Christ, but a string of words clipped and trimmed with the nicest scholarly

art ; interpreted by an order who have made themselves, in successive ages, the jest or the scorn of Christendom, and whose acknowledged chief is at the head of a government whose abominations stink in the nostrils of the civilized world. What profound unbelief in the power of the truth to bear witness to and to rule over spirits is at the bottom of this language of Dr. Pusey, and of a distinguished Archbishop of the Church. “ *Nevertheless,*” said the Saviour sadly, “ *when the Son of man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?*” Will He find any belief left in His Church, and even in the shepherds of His flock, that He holds still the power to guide, constrain, and rule men’s spirits, by the light of His truth and the magnet of His love?

Brethren, we stand for the right of private, that is, personal judgment, because we would submit ourselves to the judgment of a higher Judge. We refuse submission to the judgment of the Church, because we would be subject to the judgment of the Lord. We refuse to call that faith, which is but a slavish resolution not to deny what we are ordered to believe, because we are persuaded of the power of Christ to kindle a living faith within us, a faith which fills at once the mind with light and the heart with love. If Anglicans have

no belief in that power, then, in their view, a judgment about spiritual things, unguided by the Church, is absolutely unguided, and all astray; and a faith which is not assent to dogma, is a mere *ignis fatuus* of the intellect, luring adventurous pilgrims to their death. And if I believed that Christ had laid these solemn, these awful obligations on men, to know Him, and to walk in the light in fellowship with Him, while there was really *in them* no capacity for that knowledge, and *in Him* no perpetual willingness to help them to attain to it, then it is not Church dogmas in which I should find rest, for the Church in that case would be to me one monstrous lie. I would pray to be delivered from the dream that I have a spirit, and from the awful burden of responsibility which the belief in the Spirit entails. Let us eat, and let us drink, and let us die, and have done with it for ever, and pray God that oblivion may come soon.

And this is what it comes to at last. The rest in authoritative teaching is for the moment; when that rest is ended the next step is atheism, and the next brutal sensuality or frenzied despair. There is no true rest for man but in the Highest. He rests only when his mind is drawn forth to know, and his heart is drawn forth to love, the God of in-

finite wisdom, truth, and mercy ; and when he has an inward witness that he knows Him whom to know is everlasting life. And those who tell me that such self-sought self-attained knowledge under the teaching of the Highest, is a delusion, and that such inward witness, unless it grow out of the assurance of competent human authority, is an empty dream, rob me on the one hand of all that is worth living for, and on the other despise, if they do not deny, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. And it is blank unbelief in the Spirit of Truth which is at the root of it all ; unbelief in the capacity of man's spirit to commune with Him, and unbelief in His power to bear witness to human hearts.



Sermon v.

The Living Way.

"By a new and living way."—Heb. x. 20.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."—John xiv. 6.



THESE words seem to take us forth from the gloom into the sunlight. We pass out of the dim religious light, dim with the smoke of incense and the stain of colour, into the pure free air of heaven. We leave the region of mystery for the realm of truth, the law which killeth for the living faith which quickens, justifies, and saves.

Those who have followed the course of my argument through these Lectures will understand what I mean, when I say that my charge against the Ritualists is that in every way they believe too little, and not too much. They believe altogether too little about the Fatherly authority in the Church to which they must look to rule them; too little about the sacramental Communion with the Lord, which they need to satisfy their hearts; too little about the doctrines of divine truth, and the vital

facts of the Gospel history, which they need to know that belief may be intelligent; too little about the Incarnation, though they are always brooding over its mystery; too little about the Mediator, though they are always "pleading" His sacrifice; too little about Christ, though His name is ever on their lips. As with the Romanists, it is really the dead Christ whom they are always contemplating. It is the visage wan and marred, the form bowed and stricken with the death-stroke, which they ever delight to pourtray in their images, and which they are ever aiming to reproduce in their most aspiring and saintly lives. "*Why seek ye the living among the dead?*" is the question which the angels urge on them. "*He is not here, but is risen!*" Follow in spirit Him who is the Resurrection and the Life to the world of the Resurrection, and as the Lord's risen men walk in freedom, the freedom of life, in fellowship with Him "*who was dead, but is alive again, and liveth for evermore.*"

Man, when he passes out of the charmed circle of the home, needs the assurance that it is a home still into which he is passing, and that the wide world into which he enters with some dread of its vastness, is filled with the light of a Father's

presence, and charged with the influence of a Father's vigilant care and love. High Churchmen are surely quite right in believing that the Father cannot have left Himself without witness, or the children without guidance, lest faith and hope should quite die down within them when the dread problems of life force themselves on the sight. The Father "*hath not left Himself without witness*"—clearer witness than "fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The only begotten Son of the Father came that every eye that seeth Him might see the Father, that every heart that knoweth Him, or rather is known of Him, might know the Father, and that every word of truth and every touch of strength which comes to us from any side, might be accepted as distinctly the Father's guidance and help, and the token of His ever constant care and love. The Son came to reveal the Father everywhere, to shew how the world is filled by His presence, and how that presence, as the sunlight, irradiates the whole sphere of our lives.

And to us the unbelief seems dark and deadly, which would shut up that Fatherly manifestation with which all that we look upon is charged, if the eye of a living faith is open to behold it, to a man

or a line of men, of like infirmities and passions with ourselves ; men whose infirmities and passions grow more conspicuous continually as fresh claims are made upon them, and who become at last drearily, hopelessly bereft of power to teach or help one living human soul. Nothing is more paralyzing in the long run to the life of a man or of an Order, than the impotent effort to play the God to mankind. Infirmity inevitably deepens into impotence, and passion into fatuity, as this awful mockery proceeds. And then, when the only light which men are assured that God has left to them is seen to be darkness, picture the horrors of that darkness which settles over the multitude of orphaned and desperate hearts.

Communion with Christ—communion whereby His life may flow into us and quicken us, so that we may be living members of His living body, and may “*abide in Him*.” Surely the Anglicans are quite right in pining for it. Surely baptism is quite meaningless unless it signifies that the Lord claims us as infants for His own ; and the Lord’s Supper is profaned unless we realize by it that we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and stir up our souls to make that membership something more vital than a name. This

union with Christ is the one supreme good ; it is, simply and purely, salvation. But that unbelief is to me quite terrible, which affirms that faith will not realize that union, that love will not realize it, that fellowship of mind and spirit with the Lord will not realize it ; but that a morsel of bread and a drop of wine from the hand of one who bears some ordained marks—but not from the hand of another in whom the marks are wanting—alone can effect this union, that is, make it vital to the full nourishment, the complete salvation of the soul. I have quoted a passage from an Essay, entitled “Thirty Years in the English Church,” on p. 22, in which this idea is very explicitly set forth. And it seems to me to be the most utter faithlessness. It counts faith, love, and fellowship of mind and spirit, secondary, and a material substance conveyed through formal instruments, primary, in affording assurance on the vital question, Am I a member of the living Body, am I a saved man in Christ Jesus. I can perfectly well understand how those who have persuaded themselves of the truth of the sacramental idea of grace, find an entire peace and satisfaction for the time in their Communion, which they are sure that all who believe simply in the fellowship of faith and love must miss. I suppose

there is no courage in the battle field so daring, as that of the man who believes that the amulet which he wears on his arm is a sure talisman against wounds and death. It lasts till he lies crushed and gasping on the bloody ground, cursing bitterly the juggling fiends whose promises lured him to his fate. But for the time the assurance is perfect. And such assurance, but none higher and more enduring, is within the Sacramentalist's reach. Again, we have spoken of knowledge of the truth, a fellowship of mind as well as of spirit with the Saviour, a faith which dwells in the light and can give a reason for its hope, which searches the hidden mysteries, yea even the deep things of God, and hopes to attain to the perfect knowledge when its course of Divine education is complete. Surely the Anglicans and Romanists are again quite right in demanding a sure resting-place for the intellect, as well as a sure hold for the affections and passions of the heart. The truth must have form for the mind which it can deal with according to its laws, while it is a life within the spirit, drawing it to hear the Saviour's voice. A man must know what he believes, and why he believes. There must be that in the matter of the belief of which his mind can give an intelligent account, and by which it can

justify its faith ; though the truth has its surest, deepest lodgment in the very centre of his being, and holds him and rules him there by a force which can never be wholly explained. A man needs to know moreover, what light the higher knowledge can cast for him on all his other knowledge, and how it can explain to him his position, work, and destiny in this wonderful world. And it is the most paralyzing, the most soul-destroying thing to tell him, that this longing for a personal satisfaction can never be satisfied, and that the search for it is a delusion, which simply leads souls away from the resting places of truth. That, in fact, men in the past have settled for him, under a guidance which it is hopeless for him now to seek for himself, the precise forms in which his thoughts about spiritual things must clothe themselves ; and that the narrow notions of men—hard, harsh, soulless dogmas—limit for him the boundless universe of contemplation, and disclose to him, on an authority which suspends all the higher activities of his being, all that he can hope to know of God.

Too little faith, then, is my complaint of the Ritualists, not too much.

Let us then look into the nature of this "*living*

way," of which the Saviour and the Apostle speak, "*by which we draw near to God.*"

The essential feature of Christianity, that which constitutes the newness and the livingness of the way to God which it opens, is the fact that its great revelation is the revelation of a life—the Life which was with the Father, and was manifested in the world. Not by law, not by word primarily, but by life, the perfect human life, God proclaimed the Gospel of reconciliation to the world. The spell which the Lord laid on the men who knew Him in the flesh, was the spell of vital attraction. They saw and believed. The word "*Follow Me,*" was simply irresistible. "*Then they forsook all and followed Him.*" The spell by which the Lord attracted those who did not know Him in the flesh as disciples, of whom St. Paul shall be our ensample, was still this vital attraction. Jesus appeared to him in the way, and when he had seen Jesus, immediately he "*was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*" Paul, when he had seen Jesus, was a man transformed; his life directed itself into a new channel; he became the

epistle of Jesus to the world. The same vision of the Lord as a living Being, the same strong grasp of faith on the great facts of His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension to the Father, lies at the heart of the mystery of conversion in all ages. The living Lord apprehended by the soul as living, alone explains the power which the Gospel of the Lord Jesus has put forth for the regeneration of the world. To draw men into vital harmony with His life, was the Lord's one means of drawing them into harmony with God. He lived a life in this world which was the fullest revelation of God which this universe can ever know. What the sun is in the heavens, that the life of the Lord Jesus is in the inner heaven of our spiritual experience. It is the essential light of God. Purer light no archangel can gaze upon ; nay, the purest light of God is here. "*In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.*" This life which was with the Father was made manifest ; "*and we have seen it,*" saith St. John, "*and bear witness and shew unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us ; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.*"

Those whom he addresses, and whom he considers capable of receiving this manifestation of the Father, and holding this fellowship, are the general body of the disciples, whom he elsewhere addresses as little children, and whom he exhorts to keep themselves from idols. And to them, to us, there are depths of the Divine nature thus revealed, which have no other revelation. The Cross and the Passion, in other words the life of the Man of Sorrows, is the one way by which man may see and know the fulness of the Godhead. And hereby alone can they be drawn into that vital harmony with the Father, out of which they passed by transgression, and to which, reconstituted in a divine form, they are restored by grace. *"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* *"And of this fulness have we all received, and grace for grace."*

This life, we say, is the sunlight of the spiritual sphere. It is the shining forth of the light of God in the world. And what is the nature of the ministry of the sunlight? It glorifies all that it touches; it bathes all dull things in living splendour; and fills us with a great joy at beholding the beauty and wonder of the world. That which maketh manifest is light, and it teaches us to hail the light whenceso-

ever it may stream on us. It is from the sunlight that we learn to love its reflections, the soft, tender touches, the half-lights, the moonlight, and the starlight, and all the fountains whence its rays stream on us, fed ever by the perennial spring. And thus, the light of the life of Christ, did we understand "the living way," would teach us to watch for and rejoice in the light, whencesoever its floods might flow. One light-bearing organ or institution in the firmament of our spiritual life on earth, would fail miserably to satisfy the conviction and the craving of our spirits. We should be sure that our Sun had filled the whole world around us with His lustre, and that from every object, every institution, every life which has any fellowship with Him, rays would stream on us of which He is the fountain; which we are capable of discerning for ourselves and delighting in, because He has made us capable of discerning and delighting in Himself.

One authorized organ of Christ in our land! Why, if He is "the Light," he will make ten thousand, all reflecting His brightness, all lit from His fire. And, taught to behold His beauty, and walk in His light, we learn the secret of discovering kindred beauties which are hidden everywhere around us; and we catch the gleams and tender

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passages of light which dull eyes would miss, where-with He has gladdened every step of our pathway through this wilderness world.

Light, surely, is the one thing which men may be trusted to recognize, and which has power to bear its own witness to the organs which God has constituted to discern it. Men believe in the sun because they see its light. They are not told that they must look to it; it tells them where to look by its quickening beams. And light would be a strange image of the Person who is to spirits what the sun is to the world, if there were no faculty in man capable of discerning Him, and no power in Him to make Himself known to the souls whom He comes to quicken, to purify, and to save. Strange indeed it would be if men were bidden by Him to look to an Order or an institution in which they can see no light, and to believe in the darkness; if they were denied by Him that blessed privilege of turning to the light which God gives to the flowers, and of sunning themselves in its beams wherever their glow may be felt, or their gleam may be seen through the gloom. No! when that which calls itself His light is seen to be darkness, when it blinds, dwarfs, cramps, and paralyses souls, when it genders to bondage, and fosters the

foulest corruption and wrong, when it gets at length to stink in every nostril, and to be a curse on every lip, we learn from Christ Himself to hate it with godly intensity, and to brand it with stern reprobation as the deadliest pest of mankind.

The "new way" by which we draw near to God is "the living way;" the way of recognizing and believing in the Divine Life.

I ask you now to consider the actual tenour of the life of Christ, and the mode of its manifestation to, and influence on, mankind. We shall see then how absolutely repugnant it is to the whole spirit and method of the system, by which the party of "the Church" in all ages has been seeking to honour it, and to set forth its lessons before the world.

Compare the life of Christ in its wholeness, the spirit which pervaded it, and the kind of influence which it sought to put forth, with the spirit and the methods of Ritualism in all ages, and judge for yourselves whether it be of Christ or no. And this is the true test. The quotation of isolated texts and countertexts will be but of little help to those who have not studied the word as a whole, and become penetrated by its spirit. The word must explain the words. Certainly it could never

have been intended that the mere quotation of fragments of the word of God should be the settlement of controversies, or so many texts had not been left there, capable, when taken out of the harmony of the whole, of being used with apparent honesty to establish the most conflicting and questionable dogmas. It was in God's purpose that we should bring a spiritual eye to the study of His spiritual truth, nor presume to think that the eye of a keen intellect is strong enough to gauge its depths. Read the Gospel of St. John, for instance, or the Epistle to the Galatians, and then open some book which sets forth the High Churchman's ideas, and judge whether the same mind shines through them, and the same Spirit manifests Himself by them to the world.

The Lord brought absolutely nothing into the world but a life, and the spiritual power with which it was charged, and which He believed would be recognized by men. With all the resources of the universe at His disposal to dress it in seemly pomp, and surround it with a halo of carnal glory, He calmly put them all aside. It had been easy to terrify men into obedience. Church anathemas, backed by all the subtleties of human torture, which none have ever explored so profoundly as

Christian priests, are but as the stings of angry insects, compared with the terror with which, if the Lord had had any belief in the influence of terror, He could have affrighted men. It would have been an easy matter too to coax and ensnare our intoxicated senses, by such pomp and splendour as the Ritualist has never seen even in his dreams, if the Lord had had any belief in the value of the influence which He could thus have exerted over men. But He came to restore men to the Father, to the truth, to the light, to the life of free citizens of the Father's kingdom, capable of His fellowship, and of intelligent sympathy with His thoughts and aims. And He had but one instrument of power, His living word and His living deed—a life which by word and work was one act of sacrifice, and which, completing itself in the crowning sacrifice, became the spring of His supreme power: "*And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.*"

The whole apparatus of worship with which the Ritualist surrounds "the Sacrifice," is a deep dishonour to the Lord. It is a trust in an influence in which He had no sort of trust; it is a kind of homage which His very soul repels. It is like the costly spices which Nicodemus, afraid to honour

the life of Christ by confession, brought all too late to embalm His corpse and incense His grave. The deepest wrong which we can offer to the Saviour is to distrust the only power which He cares to put forth, and in the working of which He has any kind of hope. "*Who hath required this at your hand,*" is the rebuke still of those who care chiefly to surround His presence in the Sacrament with all the dignity which elaborate ceremonial can bestow, and to whom the new and living way seems to be little more than a dream.

I believe that of all the sad sights which the angels see in this sad world, the saddest is this—the splendid robe, the smoke of incense, and the breath of music, wherewith the Lord's servants are hiding the light of His life from the world. Saddest, because it pollutes the very fountain of healing, and paralyzes the vital power by which He hopes to save sad souls at the very heart. A Church which seeks "to restore the daily sacrifice," and surround it with ceremonial splendour, is killing the world's hope of redemption at the very root, and piercing with a new and sharper pang the heart of the Lord.

Blessed be God that a "new and living way" is ever open to us, by which we may at all times draw

near with boldness, and hold direct, free, and filial intercourse with Him.

Let us confess at once that there is no denial of the truth set forth in these words of St. Paul, either in the Roman or Anglican creeds. On the contrary, the confession of it is clear and earnest. According to the confessions and formularies of the Anglican Church, Christ is the one living way to the Father, the one Prophet, Priest, and King in His Church. But then it is held that He has human vicegerents—priests, prophets, and rulers—who represent Him and act for Him in the world. I have already quoted some very strong statements of Anglican divines to this effect, and few can question seriously that an Order of men having an authority to speak and to exercise certain functions in His name, which the body of believers does not share, is recognized in the whole system of the Church. And this is really a denial of the Lord's true and sole headship, as Prophet, Priest, and King in His Church. The man at hand removes the Lord afar off. A seen representative is needed because He is unseen; a present visible organ is constituted because He is in some far off heavenly world. And this is unbelief. It is the denial of a fundamental principle of Christianity. The "Lord at

hand and not afar off" is its proclamation; the Lord, not as the oblation to be perpetually offered, but as the brother, the loving, fellow-suffering brother, who *is* our propitiation, and by whom we draw near unto God.

For He is THE WAY. The Priest who has reconciled us *is* the propitiation; and "He is our peace," in that by His incarnation He has brought God to our knowledge, and by His offering for our sin has restored us reconciled to His love. We have already considered the definitions of the priest and the priestly functions which leading Anglicans lay down. The priest is, briefly, the man "who has charge of our divine relations, and conducts our divine affairs." And we know that there is but one Being who can take charge of our divine relations, and who can conduct our divine affairs. There is but One in this great universe who can sustain to us even partially this relation, and take on Himself the burden of conducting our intercourse with God. One who by His sacrifice, His one complete offering for sin, has declared the Father reconciled to man, and beseeches man to be reconciled to God. He has not simply provided a propitiation which we can plead whenever, conscious of guilt, we bend

before the mercy-seat; He *is* our propitiation; God *is* reconciled in Him; the guilt is cancelled; the veil is rent; the way to the Holiest is laid open, and in Christ we have free right of access and audience there. This idea of a "daily sacrifice," to be pleaded constantly before a Father who needs each moment to be appeased, is a denial of the Father in the Son. "*God is in Christ.*" "*The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*" The Father Himself set the Advocate who represents us at His right hand. It is not a new sacrifice that the Father needs, that He may be turned from His purposes of wrath. It is belief in the ever-living sacrifice that He asks from us, that He may find free course for His purposes of love. And the Lord has not perpetually to open a way, by pleading as with an unreconciled Father what He has accomplished on our behalf. He is the way; and we need no way to Him. The only help which man can offer to us, is help to hold fast and to use this freedom of access to Christ. No man, no institution, can be an appointed way to the Saviour. It would be the denial of all that He has accomplished by His work, to remove Him so far away. Him the Brother, the Saviour, whose tears of compassion seal His tenderness,

whose groans and blood urge His plea, "*Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*" He saith not, Come unto My ministers, My ordinances, My altar; but come unto Me, come to the arms of My love; come to My heart, and be at rest. At rest, because "I am the way;" because the Father is here. "*Acquaint thyself now with Him and be at peace.*" This is the Life of God, the Eternal Life; come to it and be quickened. To catch its glow, to be stirred by its pulses, is to be saved. He, your Priest, by His one offering, has laid open the way for every trembling human footstep; to shut it again, or narrow it to the width of a man's wisdom, power, and goodness, is to rob the soul and to rob the world of God.

He is THE TRUTH.—He is the one Prophet and Apostle of our profession. To know Him is to know the truth, and to have that understanding of the things of God which no mere effort of the intellect and no formal instruction of the scribes can afford. A new and living way to Truth, and opened by a life. The Gospel is the record of a life, and that record is open to all men to read. There is no monopoly of intelligence as to what a life means, whether words and works are good or

evil, divinely beautiful or hellishly base. Here is a word which it needs no curious art to explain; men have but to open the record and to follow Christ as disciples in the way—the way which is so plain to humble trustful hearts that a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. We can hear for ourselves the teaching which falls from His lips, and catch for ourselves the virtue that thrills from His life; and we may know the things into which the angels desire to look, and be masters of the wisdom which earth has to teach to heaven. And this truth is for MAN. There is no higher place for scribes than for ignorant wayfarers in this school. Nay, I believe in my conscience that the poor men of the world know more of what the Gospel means than the wisest. The Lord shews it to them by His Spirit, because it is life that is shewn to them, and to comprehend the book of life we have but to live. Life is the common possession of all. Neither poor nor rich, wise nor ignorant, have any advantage here. The Spirit is no respecter of persons; and God has given us no ritual of life.

“We acknowledge,” says Dr. Pusey, “that Holy Scripture is the source of all saving truth; but it does not therefore follow that every one, un-

guided, is to draw water for himself out of that living well." There is something very terrible in this warning men off from a living well. Rob a man of his right to draw for himself from the living fountain, and you condemn him sooner or later to the most awful of all agonies, the agony of death from thirst. Men are pining, panting, for the living stream; they hear it plash and gurgle, and they strain toward its quickening flood. And these shepherds beat them back by stripes and curses, and bow them down to the stagnant pool, foul with the slime of ages, which men have dug for them, while the living stream runs murmuring by. And the Lord who died that He might unseal for all that living fountain, and bring the water of life, the life of God, the eternal Life, within reach of every human lip, looks down on the faithless shepherds, as the flock driven from the living water drops panting on the burning sand; and a new grief casts a shadow over His spirit, and a new anguish takes possession of His heart.

He is THE LIFE.—A life was and is the way to the Father. To live is to draw nearer to the Father, and to be in the way of all the satisfactions which life may claim. "*If any man will do His*

will," that is, will live, "*he shall know the doctrine.*" And Christ is the King because He is the Life. It is the regal power; power to quicken, power to save. The kings of men in old time were those who could kindle and inspire them, and they are the true kings still. Rule is really inspiration. "*I that rule in righteousness, mighty to save,*" is the legend on the crown of Christ. He can rule men because He lives in them. If they have life it springs from Him as its fountain, and flowing into them it binds them by vital bands to their living and kingly Head. "*We declare unto you that eternal life,*" is the proclamation of the preachers of the Gospel. "*This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*"

Whatever lives in a spiritual sense is of Christ. Where life is the Lord is. Watch for the signs of that life whose form and spirit are set forth in the Gospel, in men, and in churches, and wherever you find it commune with it, rejoice in it, it is of God. There is no schism to be feared but that which is separation from that Life. Let me ask you to ponder the principles set forth in this extract; they appear to me to be the very marrow of the truth.

“Schism is separation—cutting off: cutting ourselves off from that to which we ought to be united.

“The root of schism is the separation of man from God. He is thereby out of harmony with the universal and ruling system of things. In this way he is out of harmony with all that remains under that presiding system. And the crime of schism lies in this: that it is a contest with Him who has instituted that system—that it arises out of our repugnancy to Him, or (to take the lowest view of it) out of our want of understanding of the principles which He has established for the unity of the world that He has made.

“‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;’ He said, ‘Let us make man in our own image; after the image of God created He him.’ ‘And God looked upon all the works that his hands had made; and, behold, they were all *very good*.’ As yet, there was only one will in the universe. The idea which has been often since expressed by poets and philosophers, as if the entire visible and spiritual form of things was but a body or a garment of God, was then absolutely true. Everything was the utterance of His mind, and an utterance with such clearness and correspondency, that His mind could repose upon it all. And this was the original Sabbath. He rested from the works that His hands had made. But the time came, when another will, the will of a creature, was to display itself in action. Man *would* be as God. He would not that God should be God. He would have in his own hands the resources for happiness. He accepted a lie. He was dependent, and he would

feel and act as though he were independent. And in this way he gained a step in the development of his being, while he lost of his original simplicity and purity. He gained a step in the development of his being : it was not merely the temptation of Satan—‘Ye shall be as gods;’ it was the testimony of God Himself—‘The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.’ He had the experience of a will ; he had gained the experience of the evil that is in the exercise of a will : he had become capable of the experience of the good that is in the exercise of a will. But in the first act of his will he had entered into contest with the will of God ; and now there was one thing, and that the highest thing in the creation, out of the universal harmony ; and the Sabbath rest was broken ; and it became needful for God to lay the foundation-stone of a new creation. And it is a mistake for any man to suppose that God still rested from His labours, for He who is in the bosom of the Father saith : ‘My Father worketh,’ onward from that hour up to this hour, and onward,—‘My Father worketh, and I work.’*

“Here is the first step of schism. The absolute good is in God—that good which is not merely the means to some other good, but is good in itself, and for itself. From that, man has now parted : with that, he is now at variance. This is separation, in the most emphatic conceivable sense. All spiritual creatures, capable of a will, were in harmony with God—a condition in one

* John v. 17.

respect less developed than that which followed ; in the same way as a child, in the expansion of his manly faculties, too often loses much of the original simplicity and purity of his character—that beauty on which the father’s eye could rest, as the eye of God rested on the creation at the first, and pronounced it all to be very good. But in thus going out of harmony with the presiding will of the Creator, there necessarily arose a want of harmony between the parts of the spiritual and intellectual creation itself: being at variance with the main-spring, they jarred and jangled one against the other. As this refers to a man as a creature capable of desire and choice, the cause of it is obvious to our own experience. With his heart set upon God—on that which was in harmony with the entire plan of God—there could be no mutual interference between man and man, between creature and creature, in the pursuit of that which they desired. With the heart set on creatures—on objects of sense, and vanity, and avarice, and pride—life became a contest, a mutual repugnancy throughout all its regions.

* * * *

“ The restoration must be, at least, a restoration to harmony with God ; but it is now to be a harmony of will with God—a higher harmony (let us remember the express Divine testimony, recorded in the very opening of the Scripture, to which I have already referred on this subject)—a higher harmony than that of which man was capable in the state of innocency in which we find him at the first. He must, at the least, be restored to God ; and by a restoration to God, it is a part of the plan of

the Father, and of the Saviour, that harmony should be restored between man and man. He is to be restored to God; and how intimately! The words expressing that intimacy of union are not to be lightly spoken. You will remember them: Scripture speaks of those who 'dwell in God,' and have 'God dwelling in them.' It needs not to add a word in proof that it is sound Christian doctrine, that the unity of the human spirit with God is meant to be the most intimate union which it is within the range of conception to represent. 'He that eateth Me,' says Christ, 'liveth by Me;' he shall live by Me 'as I live by the Father.' And how does He 'live by the Father?' 'I and the Father are one:' 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father:' 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life:' 'I am *the* Life.' To be separated from Me, is to be separated from *the* Life; to possess Me, is to have with Me community of life. And what life? That 'eternal life, that was with the Father, and hath been manifested unto us.' I need not say more, as to the plan of Redemption being a plan of restoring unity between man and his Maker: but it is, as I have said, the unity of a will; and only on that condition will God look upon this new work, that His hands have made, and pronounce it to be 'very good'—if in my will, in my consciousness and choice, as in my natural life without choice or consciousness, I live and move and have my being in God."—*Discourses, A. J. Scott, pp. 230-234.*

The life of God is the one thing whose manifes-

tations you are to search for. And be sure that no men, no Order of men, no Churches, have the monopoly of it. Like light it is shed all abroad. Search for it, and suffer yourselves ever to be drawn to it when you find it; and call nothing by a sacred name, whatever it may call itself, which wears the aspect and breathes the coldness of death. More light! More life! Be this the cry of your spirit; and hail them as watchers hail the dawn, whence-soever they may seem to flow. They have but one fountain, the living Word; they have but one end, the restoration of man to God.

There is a spirit revealed in the words which I am about to quote, from which I would have you shrink as you would shrink from the touch of a corpse. It is an extract from a dialogue between Dr. Spencer, the Rector of the parish, and John Evans, one of his parishioners, who had been tempted into frequenting a conventicle.

“*J.*—I am sure, Sir, that in the old Church I never heard anything from you but what was good; and I never thought, till the other day, that I could pray better in any other words than in those of the Church Service. But there is something so fine in the prayers without book, as they are offered at meeting, and——

“*Dr.*—And something perhaps in the manner and

language of the preacher, who preaches there without a book also. But let me ask, had you no other reasons than these, and such as these, for leaving the Church?

“*J.*—None, Sir; but such as these; at least, none that I am aware of.

“*Dr.*—You did not consider that either the Church Prayer Book, or my Sermons, taught doctrines contrary to the great truth revealed in God’s Word?

“*J.*—God forbid, Sir.

“*Dr.*—You had then, perhaps, some such notion as this; you thought that in the Church you could pray well, but at meeting you could pray rather better?

“*J.*—Just so, Sir.

“*Dr.*—And you thought that you were doing God service, then, by joining that worship which touched you most?

“*J.*—And, surely, Sir, I was right in that thought, at least.

“*Dr.*—You would have been right, if God had not chosen a Minister for you. In that case, perhaps, you might have used your Christian Liberty, as you call it, and joined any congregation and worship you pleased. But His having given a clear command alters the case, and makes that which would otherwise have been a matter of indifference, an act of disobedience and sin.”

—*Traacts for the Times*, No. 29, pp. 3, 4.

This message of authority seems to me to be simply a message of death. Tell a man to avoid that which attracts him because it has a glow of life in it; teach him, whatever else he may or may not

keep clear of, to keep clear of life, of all that kindles, quickens, and inspires him ; shut him up to that whose touch is as cold to him as a dead man's hand, and in the end you make him inevitably a fiend or a brute. It is a message of death to him, and plays into the hands of the being whose work is the murder of souls.

But on this point I would wish to be perfectly understood. I am very far indeed from contending that what a man feels drawn to, even by vital attraction, is that in which those who feel a call or capacity to teach him should be willing that he should rest. Life is on various levels and of various powers. The highest should be ever seeking to lift men higher, to draw them from lower to higher forms and ends of life. But then the only power which is of any account here is superior life, stronger vital attraction ; shew men a higher life and seek to win to it their sympathy and hope. Don't stultify or madden them by saying "I have no superior life to shew you, at least none that can commend itself to any organ which you possess. I can only say that I have authority to force this on you as the best gift that God has for you, even though you feel it to be cold and dark as death."

This is a teaching which has no belief in Him

who is the life ; no love for life, because “ *He is alive again and liveth for evermore ;* ” and no hope that life, however it may break loose from our fetters and swathing bands, will recognize His voice, obey the sway of His hand, and enter at length, purified and perfected, into the congress of the living on high. And think you that the Lord, whose mercy is over all His children, can do other than hate the system which shuts up His light and His life, free and wide as the universe, within the ministries of an Order, of which abroad men can hardly speak without curses, and which at home is fast making itself the laughing-stock of the higher intelligence and earnestness of the times ; though some of its more serious leaders sometimes lift a veil, which makes us rather shudder than laugh at the thought of what may be behind.

Men and brethren ! use your own intelligence on this system and all systems ; the right and the power to use it thus is your sacred birthright. Open your New Testament, and see what spirit the Master was of, to what kind of influence He trusted to bring all human hearts under His hand ; and if you find men anywhere, in the name of Christ, burying His light in dogmas, His life in sacraments, and His loving rule of spirits in a priest’s “ direction,” let

no sophistries, let no apparent successes, let no beauties of character and life, tempt you into doubting that these men, in the long run, are doing the devil's work in the world, and not God's.



Sermon vi.

The Spiritual Freedom of Judaism.

"For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."—Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.



OUR Lord sums up in two brief but pregnant sentences, the lessons of the Law. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*—Matt. xxii. 37-40.

In the judgment of Him who gave the Law, the aim of the Dispensation was to quicken and nourish that love to God and to man, which we too readily believe is the distinctive and exclusive characteristic

of the Dispensation of the Gospel. According to Christ the Law and the Gospel are of the same essence, there is no breach of continuity in the Divine method of human education. The same Master, by the same methods, but in various measures and stages, under all the Dispensations was educating the human race. And this testimony, so precise and explicit, is doubly important, inasmuch as there is no greater source of perplexity to the serious students of the Divine word, than the prevalent notion that there is a radical contrast between the methods of the Gospel and the Law. We are taught to search for it, and in some measure it is the key to our theological system. We expect to discover discord instead of unity, and are thrown out of the track of sound thinking from the first.

God has not two faces, nor has He two voices—the one stern and full of command, the other benign and full of love. There must be something radically false in the notion that He has maintained the one aspect and tone consistently through all the ages of the Jewish Dispensation, while He has reserved the other as consistently for the ages of the Christian Church. We are taught, and too easily believe, that He has adopted systematically modes of action under the Law, which He discards

under the Gospel. In the one, formal commandment, ritual service, and local sanctity; in the other, loving attraction, free worship, and open intercourse with human souls. Men's minds are perplexed by this double mode of operation, these contrasting principles of government, this sharp break in the line of the Dispensations, cutting it into two sections with distinctly opposite characteristics, the one wearing mainly the features of bondage, the other of freedom; the one revealing a law-giver, the other declaring a Father; the one ministering to death, the other to life, light, and eternal joy. Where is the Divine unity, men say, when they are bidden to recognize these sharp oppositions; where is the sign of the ONE SPIRIT who works through diverse but surely not conflicting operations,—the ONE GOD who from the beginning and through all the ages worketh all and in all.

And it may freely be confessed that in the way in which many Christian expositors and apologists write about the Old Testament, it is difficult to discover Him. Were we compelled to accept the popular view as to the relation of the two Dispensations, we might be driven to the conclusion of the Egyptian Gnostic Basilides, that the God of the Law is the bitter enemy of the God of the

Gospel, whom the latter came to dethrone and to destroy. Some idea of the sort really seems to me to lie at the root of the views which are propounded with great emphasis and earnestness, to the disparagement of the Old Testament record and Dispensation, by eminent writers of the Anglican Church, though not by any means of the Ritualistic school. The notion seems to be that our concern as Christians is with the New Testament alone; and that we need to cut ourselves off decisively from the Book of the Old Covenant, its forbidding aspect, its gloomy atmosphere, its sanguinary spirit, and its oppressive and burdensome law. The Rev. Baden Powell, in a work entitled "Christianity without Judaism," develops this view at length, and with great ability, and the same tincture of thought colours the very able paper on the Education of the World, by Dr. Temple, of Rugby, in the "Essays and Reviews." Now I could believe this perfectly well if I could further believe, with the Gnostics, that two Divine or quasi-divine Beings had been at work severally on the two Dispensations. But, believing firmly as I do in the "*one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,*" I am sure that, if I find conflict and confusion in the spirit of the two books

of the Scripture, the confusion is in me and not in the Bible ; and I set myself to discover how much of that which we hold to be distinctively Christian, was at work under the forms of the elder Dispensation ; and how far the germs which were budding in the spirit and constitution of the system which we know as Judaism, simply bloomed out into full development in the life of the Christian Church.

It is important that we should remember that we have in the Old Testament, not only the history of the institution of Judaism, and the principles which shaped its constitution, but also the history of its fortunes for 1,500 years, and the picture of what it became when moulded by the hands of successive generations, and murdered at last by its Scribes and Priests. Had we in our New Testament a history of Christendom through all these ages, had we an inspired sketch of its development, the picture of what man has made it, the oracles of faithful prophets concerning it, and the protests of teachers, newly inspired by the Holy Ghost, against the legal bondage, the formal worship, the slavish service to which we have abased it, I am persuaded that we should be startled by the likeness between the books of the two Dispensations,

and might be puzzled to tell which was Gospel and which was Law. We should see then how God is working in the same spirit, yes, and by mainly the same methods, through all the ages, effecting the regeneration and resurrection of mankind.

To me there seems to be a wonderful likeness in the principles and aims of the Jewish and Christian Churches. But we must always remember that the varied influences which God is ever bringing to bear on man to forward his education, are formally included in the circle of the Divine operation in the culture of the Jewish Church; while we need the eye of faith—which surely it is the work of the Old Testament record to train—to connect these varied operations with the Divine hand, as Church institutions under the Gospel. A remarkable and characteristic instance will illustrate my meaning. Let us read the word in Ex. xxxi. 1-6—“*And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of*

timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aboliab the son of Abisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee."

The faculty of these men is spoken of as a Divine endowment; and their work on the Tabernacle and the outward apparatus of the religious life of the people, is part of the framework of the Jewish Church. God visibly includes this as part of His culture—part of the process through which it seemed good to Him that the national life should pass. And whence did Giotto, Ghiberti, Michel Angelo, and the great Mediæval painters, sculptors, and builders draw their inspiration? God was surely the Author and Ruler of these modes of culture, these stages of development, through which it was needful that the great Church of Christendom should pass on its path of progress. The great work of Temple building and adorning was surely as much a Divine ordinance in Christendom as in the days of David and Solomon. The difference seems to be simply this, that under Judaism God comprehended visibly the whole field of the national life within the limit of the Church institutions, while under the Gospel we

have to discover the relation for ourselves. Under the Law, God laid His hand on the whole circle of the influences which shaped the national life, and claimed the rule of them ; not that we might suppose the claim to be withdrawn when we find no formal repetition of it under the Gospel, but that, instructed by the Old Testament, we may recognize the same, wherever we meet with them in the Christian ages, as part of God's discipline of the great Church of Christendom, and equally under the control of His hand.

I am persuaded that much of the misunderstanding of the relation between Judaism and Christianity, arises from the narrow area which we allow to the life of the Christian Church. Taking the large view of the Church, as comprehending the whole life and development of Christendom, you will find how one *man* is in all his ages, as well as God. All the ideas and influences by which man was moulded under Judaism, you will find at work with full force under Christianity ; and at the heart of both, the pure Divine element, the inspiration and formative principle of the whole, the spirit of freedom, the spirit of love.

And it seems to be the more important to vindicate this principle at the present time, inasmuch

as that spirit "*which gendereth to bondage*"—the spirit of orders, ordinances, and ritual in the Christian Church, powerful in all ages, and threatening to become rampant in our own—pleads Judaism as its authority, turns to the Old Testament for its inspiration, and parades the dress, the shell, the carnal part of it, as its essential element, instead of its grandly liberal life.

The more I read the Old Testament, the more I am impressed with the spirit of liberty which breathes through it, and animates all its institutions—the living purpose and hope which express themselves by all its commands. It is a noble spiritual life, the life of Sons, which the constitution and institutions of the Jewish Church were intended to develope, and did develope in all who threw open their hearts as well as their ears to its teachings, and who cared to rise through its ordinances to fellowship with its Lord. I hold Judaism to be as essentially opposed to the whole Ritualistic system, to the idea of Sacramental grace, as Christianity. Ritualism runs counter to every revelation, and not only to the last revelation of the mind of God to man. It is branded as a base bondage by the Pentateuch and the Apocalypse, as clearly as by the Epistle to the Galatians and

the Gospel of St. John. It has no principle of the Divine word anywhere to rest upon ; and if it had free play and could accomplish all its will, it would make men in these days faithless Christians, as men were made faithless Jews in old time by the Scribes of the Jewish Church.

Were my strong argument from the Bible against Ritualism simply this—I find plenty of it in the Old Testament, rigidly established on Divine authority, but I find nothing of it in the New, and therefore I may be sure that God did not intend to re-enact it under Christianity—I should feel my argument to be drearily unsubstantial. For I believe that all Holy Scripture is written for our learning, and that we are bound to look to the Law and the Prophets, as well as to the Gospels and the Epistles, for the whole written revelation of the mind of God to man. And I am profoundly thankful that I find the High Church principle in neither ; that to my mind they both appear peremptorily to condemn it ; and that palpably it has not and never had any standing by God's authority on earth, as we know that it has none and can have none in heaven.

The Judaism of the Schools had become, after the lapse of ages, as formal and soulless a religion

as any that ever existed in this world ; and it is the Judaism of the Schools which is dealt with in the writings of St. Paul, and in the history of our Lord. But the Judaism of Moses, of Samuel, of David, was a free spiritual thing, the aim of which was to lead men, through the formal services of the worldly sanctuary, to spiritual and loving fellowship with the Lord. It took little care for the forms, nay it spoke with a certain contempt of the forms, when the end sought through the forms was otherwise and more nobly gained. And I understand the essence of Formalism, Ritualism, Sacramentalism, and the like, to be this. They regard and honour the means to the end as having an independent spiritual value, as containing in themselves the earnest of the result. Hence the danger that they should become confounded with it or substituted for it. But of this estimation of forms and means as having in themselves a kind of divine value, and being of themselves acceptable to God, the Scriptures have no trace. Nay the letter as well as the spirit of the Old Testament emphatically condemns it, as I shall endeavour briefly to shew. I say briefly, for the subject is a large one, and would demand a separate book for its development. I can but offer to

my readers the outline of an argument, which I must pray them to fill up for themselves by careful and independent study of the word of God.

The text which I have quoted from St. Matthew declares how profoundly Christian the essential spirit of Judaism was, in the estimation of our Lord. The sum of the teaching of the Law and the Prophets we learn from Divine lips ; and it is the great Christian commandment—Love ; a commandment new to Scribes, and to all who were infected by their teaching, but familiar and dear to Isaiah, David, Samuel, Moses, Abraham, and all the Elders of the Jewish Church. We are searching for unity, for that which the Master indicated, when we endeavour to discover the essential likeness of the work of God for man under the Gospel and under the Law. And it is wonderful how rapidly our impression of the severe formality of Judaism vanishes, when we come to look at it closely. How much beautiful freedom we discover, where we imagined that we should find nothing but the most rigid and cramping law ! In truth, the traditions of the Schools became as great a curse to Judaism as the traditions of the Fathers have been to Christianity. In both cases we have to return

to the fountain-head, and to test the water as it issues from the spring.

The Sabbath, the Tabernacle, and the Sacrifices of the Law, will afford to us a fair opportunity of testing the truth which I am seeking to expound. If we can discover here freedom rather than Ritualism, the principle will be established.

I. The Sabbath.

Of all the Legal institutions there is none perhaps which is more associated in our minds with formality and dismality than the Sabbath. With the Rabbinical writers it is the heart's core of the system; and it is from them, and not from the Old Testament Scripture, that we derive our idea of the Jewish Sabbath, and in a measure our idea of the whole Dispensation.

But in itself, it is the most beautiful and benign of ordinances. Love, the most tender and cherishing love, breathes through the institution, and the penalties which guarded it were the strong protectors of what was destined to become the priceless possession of mankind. How the institution originated we know not. That it had some basis anterior to and independent of the Law seems plain. The first enactment of the Law of the Sabbath looks like the consecration of something

already known to the people ; and the roots of the institution lie deep in the constitution of man and the necessities of society.* But Exodus xvi. contains practically its genesis for us. A very terrible incident marked its early history in the wilderness, and lent a solemn emphasis to the command to "hallow the Sabbath day," as long as the book of the Law continued to be read in the land. The stoning of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath is dark enough as it stands recorded in Numbers xv. 32-36. But there is no need to darken it further by supposing that it was any other than a matter of regular secular business in which the man was engaged. And this is the key to the legislation on the subject. It is all purely protective, to guard the day of rest—Ritual there is none. No commandment was felt to be too rigid, no penalty too terrible, to guard the rest. But as to what was to be done on the day of rest there is hardly a trace of an indication, far less of a commandment, in the whole Word of God.

Let us suppose that with the law of the Sabbath rest an Order of Divine Service had been set forth. And suppose that the prayers which the Jew was

* Those who wish to study the subject further will find a literally exhaustive treatment of it in Dr. Hessey's Bampton Lectures for 1860.

to offer, the hymns which he was to sing, the attitudes which he was to assume, the place which he was to frequent, and the teachers whom he was to obey, had been laid down by a statute and an ordinance for all the people. And suppose further that the Sabbath-breaker had been found in the wrong building, hearing the wrong teacher, repeating the wrong prayer, or bowing in the wrong place, and had suffered for it. What then? Why, who does not feel that in that case the whole character of Judaism would be changed; and the Jewish Sabbath would become something like the formal and dreary thing which the Lord's day has been made by the Scribes and Pharisees of the Christian Church. But we find, on the contrary, that, while God guards the rest rigidly, He leaves the people the most entire freedom as to the use of it. The Tabernacle sacrifice was a simple thing, and one with which the great multitude of the people could have had little direct concern. They, as far as formal direction was concerned, appear to have been left absolutely free to rest and enjoy themselves in wise right ways on their holy day.

In Exodus xxiii. 10-12, "*And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits*

thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed," we have the heart of the mystery laid bare. The Sabbath was God's shield thrown over classes and creatures who had then, and alas! in large measure have still, no other defender and keeper than God. It was the poor man's, the slave's, the beast's holiday; and God would allow no tampering with it. His legislation on this point is brief and stern. But beyond that how little we are able to discover. The references to the Sabbath in the Old Testament are singularly few and vague. It is not only difficult, but absolutely impossible, to gather from the Old Testament any notion of what was the usual routine of sacred duties on the Sabbath, or whether there was any routine at all. Isaiah lviii. 13, 14, Jeremiah xvii. 21-27, and Ezekiel xx. 12-24, are the passages which cast the chief light upon it, but, as will be seen on reading them, the light is dim. In Nehemiah x. 31 and

xiii. 15-22, we have the protective character of the legislation very strongly revealed. Among the Jews of the later ages this abstinence became a pure superstition. They refused to defend themselves on the Sabbath from hostile assault, until taught wisdom by fearful disasters. And one Samaritan sect is said to have honoured the Sabbath by abstaining from all bodily movement ; so that a man felt himself bound to maintain the exact bodily position, in which the commencement of the Sabbath found him, unchanged to the close. But, keeping to the letter of Scripture, what a man was *not* to do on the Sabbath is tolerably clear from the language of the Old Testament ; but, concerning the occupation of his time, there seems to have been no explicit guidance in the word of God. Nay, there is no hint that there was any authoritative guidance, and there is only a vague allusion which indicates that a fixed custom had grown up to supply its place. In Numbers xxviii. 9, 10, we have the direction for a double burnt-offering, morning and evening. And in 2 Kings iv. 22, 23, “ *And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him* ”

to day ? it is neither new moon, nor Sabbath. And she said, It shall be well," we have an indication that it was not unusual to resort to prophets and wise men for teaching on the Sabbath day. The passage does not seem to me to justify any stronger conclusion than this. When it is pressed as a proof of a universal custom, it is pressed altogether too far. It seems to mean that on certain days, and, among others, on the Sabbaths, the Man of God was at home, and could be consulted by those who needed his counsel. But had the custom been anything like universal, not to say obligatory, it is inconceivable that there should have been no clearer reference to it in the whole of the Old Testament Scripture. So that, on the whole, we conclude, that the legislation on the Sabbath was simply protective, intended to guard the rest of the day for man and for beast, while the people were left absolutely free, as far as any order of Divine service is concerned, to use the day to the best of their judgment to promote the development of their higher life.

That it was so used, nobly and faithfully, we cannot question. During the earlier ages, at any rate, there must have been beautiful domestic and social services of prayer and song, and commun-

ings of mind with mind, and heart with heart, concerning the Divine mercies and deliverances, as they were camped out there in the wilderness, under the shadow of the cloud which led their marches and shielded their rest, or were settled on the lot which the Lord had given them in the goodliest land that lay within the borders of their world. There were Sabbath Psalms. Psalm xcii. is a noble example. The spirit that breathed forth that lofty hymn is a measure of the profound interest, the thankfulness, the hope, the joy, which the day awakened. Such works of art never stand alone. If one such is possible there will be many; a whole people must be profoundly interested in the theme, when such works as these are given to the world. From myriads of pure and pious homes, dotting the hill slopes or nestling in the valleys of Palestine, the Sabbath voice of joy and praise would be borne on the breezes; and gatherings of wide districts, as on the Scotch and Welsh mountains, might from time to time be held, whence a loftier and more fervent strain of jubilant thanksgiving would float upward to the gate of heaven. But it was all spontaneous; free as the morning breeze that bore it, fresh as the gurgle of the rill that ran murmuring near, and glad as the song of a bird in

the upper sky. No ordinance commanded it, no form trammelled it, no authority sustained it. It was as free as we may make the prayers and the praises of an Independent Church.

In a word, if you want a ritual of Sabbath worship, an order book in which is set down what a man must say, and what a man must do, when he draws near to God in the worship of the sanctuary, you must shut your Old Testament, you must shut your New Testament, and you must open the Service Book, which, whatever its worth and virtue may be, and I am far from attempting to estimate them here, did, as matter of fact, grow into shape and use, in the ages which gave birth to the chief corruptions of the Christian Church.

II. The Tabernacle—" *the worldly sanctuary*,"—in the constitution of which, with its "*ordinances of divine service*," we may expect to find those elements of Judaism, on which, as a prefiguration of the worship of the Christian Sanctuary, the Ritualist would chiefly rely.

There are two questions, the discussion of which may throw some light on the essential principle of the relation of the Judaic worship to the worship of the Christian Church.

1. How far did the Divine Author of the Institution attach importance to the continued rigid observance of the forms which He ordained?

2. If we find that the importance thus attached to the forms was slight, or at any rate secondary, on what principle can we account for the exceeding minuteness of detail, with which everything concerning the ordinances of Divine service and the worldly sanctuary was prescribed?

On the subject of the Tabernacle I observe—

(i.) That it was constructed with the most elaborate exactitude after a Divine pattern. All things, even in minutest detail, were to be made after the pattern shewed to Moses in the mount. (Exodus xxv. 8-22.)

(ii.) It was consecrated when complete with the utmost solemnity; and “*a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.*” (Exodus xl.) Here, surely, if anywhere, we are to look for an enduring institution. The Ark in the Tabernacle, where the daily sacrifice was offered, was the ordained meeting-place between man and God. Whatever the Altar is supposed to be by the Ritualist under the

Gospel, that the Ark in the Tabernacle appears to be under the system of the Jewish Church. But—

(iii.) The Ark and the Tabernacle were speedily divorced, by human and unauthorized acts, and were never again reunited; not only without protest, but apparently with the benediction of Him who instituted them. While—

(iv.) This elaborate and costly structure, made expressly after a heavenly pattern, was suffered to drop piecemeal to decay in utter obscurity; while a new and more splendid edifice, which had its origin in the thoughts of a human brain and the aspirations of a human heart, was set up, not by Divine suggestion, but simply by Divine permission, in its room.

The Ark and the Tabernacle moved together through the wilderness in the midst of the host, and after the conquest they were set up by Joshua in Shiloh, in the lot of Ephraim. (Joshua xviii. 1.) From Shiloh, in the days of Eli, the people took the Ark into the battle-field. It was pure superstition, and it ended miserably. The Ark was captured, and borne away into the country of the Philistines. The Philistines lodged it in Ashdod,

where Dagon fell before it. Ashdod passed it on to Gath, Gath to Ekron. (1 Samuel v.) The men of Ekron were afraid to receive it, and it was restored to Israel at Bethshemesh, in Judah. The men of Bethshemesh sent it on to Kirjath-jearim, still in Judah. (1 Samuel vi. 7.) There it remained for twenty years, and thence David brought it to the house of Obed-edom (2 Samuel vi.); whence he bore it to his own city, the city of David, where it remained until the Temple was complete.

The Tabernacle, meanwhile, seems, as far as we can trace its history, to have been moved from Shiloh to Nob, in Benjamin (1 Samuel xxi. 1), thence to Gibeon, still in Benjamin, whither we learn, from 1 Kings iii. 3, 4, that Solomon repaired to offer up sacrifice, and then it wholly vanishes from our sight.*

The Ark, and this is the essential point, seems to have been carried about hither and thither with Divine benediction, and no commandment was

* Some who read this may remember hearing a very interesting argument on this subject by the Rev. Dr. Halley, the Principal of New College, at a meeting of the Congregational Board a few months ago. It helped me to see some matters of detail, which I have here touched upon, in a clearer light, and I gladly recall the interest with which many beside myself listened to it at the time.

given that it should be restored to the Tabernacle. We have a full record of the communing of David with God concerning the building of the Temple; but there is no hint of blame on the ground of his having broken the ritual law, by severing the Ark from the Tabernacle, and by seeking to establish, out of the promptings of his own pious heart, a new meeting-place for God and the people in its room. And why? Plainly because the Lord knew that in David's heart, and in David's home, there was a truer and holier temple than any which the associations of the past, however solemn, could constitute; that the Ark was better with David than with the formal and degenerate priests; and that, on the altar of David's spirit, there was the noblest sacrifice that any in Israel could offer, while the purest and most fragrant incense was the musical breath of his praise. God suffered the Ark to attend the course of the man whose spiritual life was most intense and vivid, to dwell by him in his house as a perpetual benediction, and to consecrate the city where he set up at length his glorious throne.

The history of the transition of the Tabernacle to the Temple is wholly in the same key. (2 Samuel vii.) The thought did not, in the first

instance, arise by the suggestion of the Lord. It arose spontaneously, as far as we can trace it, in David's mind, and it was even adopted, in the first instance, with some slight rebuke. In one sense, like the establishment of the monarchy, it was a step on in the development of the nation; but it was a step nearer to the habits and customs of the surrounding nations, and a step away from the primitive simplicity, and the spiritual headship of the Lord. But, however the Temple succeeded the Tabernacle, it was by no Divine ordinance; like the kingdom it was adopted of God, but not ordained; and whatever may have been the order of service in the Temple—and how little we know about it—it was essentially a man's ordinance, and could claim no direct authority from on high. It was the attempt of David and other religious leaders to supply a great need, which was felt as soon as the idea of a magnificent Temple began to be entertained. A splendid and impressive service was organized in harmony with the magnitude and importance of the building, which God had not called for, which arose out of the exigencies of the time as men interpreted them, and which God never suffered for a moment to be confused with the weightier matters which He *had* ordained, and

on which depended the spiritual health of the people. Its establishment moreover is coincident with the commencement of the era of the national decline and fall. The whole order of the Temple service was not part of Judaism as God constituted it, save in the matter of sacrifice ; and we have no evidence that it was much connected with the religious vitality and activity of the people. The Temple was the Tabernacle on a grander scale, the dimensions were doubled and the splendour was egregious. But the decline had already commenced when the people cared for such splendour. It was, in comparison with the simpler and purer Tabernacle, just what the gorgeous and vulgar St. Peter's at Rome* is to the Cathedral of Siena, St. Ouen at Rouen, or Salisbury Cathedral. And the Ritual which Solomon established there, we may fairly regard as the commencement of that decline in the purity and earnestness of worship which rapidly lapsed into idolatry, and in the end called forth a new and corrective institution—the Synagogue, which recoiled from all this splendour and formality, and set up a simple sanctuary for spiritual worship in every town and even hamlet in the land.

* I speak of the interior ornamentation.

2. The second question which we have to consider concerns the reason of this elaborate structure made diligently after a heavenly pattern, every hook, curtain, and cord in exact imitation of the forms shewn to Moses in the mount. Why this anxious care about that which was so soon to perish, and which, soon after it was established in the promised land, God, as well as man, abandoned to obscure decay? I imagine that there is but one answer. The construction of the Tabernacle was the matter of supreme concern. The use of it when made might be modified by a hundred contingencies, but the building it was of vital importance to the education of the people. Men *live* by arts and industries. These two are the motive powers of civilization. Let a nation cultivate patient industry, and exercise its higher faculty in creative and imitative Art, and nothing can stay its progress in civilization, except superior and brutal force. And God was careful to draw forth and to exercise in the wilderness those faculties which distinguish the civilized man from the savage; those, in fact, which distinguish the Jewish and the Christian peoples from the wild Arab who roams the desert to this day.

Picture the life of their camp in the wilderness,

while the Tabernacle was building. It is the strongest bond of national unity, this concentration of every faculty on a common and elevating work. There was a zeal, an energy, a buoyancy of spirit, a play of genius, an effort at forms of beauty and a pure joy in them when wrought, a mutual helpfulness, a fulness of brotherly sympathy and love, an obedience to their rulers and a submission to each other, which has no parallel in their national history. It was the joyous springtime of their life as a people, and they wrought as young lovers work for the adornment and delight of the beloved. It lifted them at once out of the level of the wanderers of the desert, with whom they had close kindred, and to whose grade they might easily have abased themselves; and it added to them a dignity, a culture, an energy, a unity, which only noble work, work which calls the religious sentiment into play, can impart to man. And this is precisely the history of the development of Christendom. God called these men openly, and set them to work on the structure of this Tabernacle. The making it, and the lavishing all their wealth of energy, genius, and possession upon it, constituted the happiest, the most joyous, the most beautiful era of their national life. It is

the most joyous and beautiful era in the life of any people, when religious fervour moves them to undertake, with all the energy, genius and wealth with which God has endowed them, great works, whereby they seek at once to honour Him, and to make known that honour and His glory to the world.

And this lies at the root of the earliest growth of art and industry everywhere. Nothing but a motive power which derives its force from religion can *start* the higher progress of mankind. I wish that I had space to trace this out in detail. In our own country, for instance, after the introduction of Christianity, when our fathers were emerging from pagan barbarism, pious men, Churchmen mostly, travelled into every country of the West, and specially to Rome, to bring home plans and notions of beautiful things—buildings, vestments, ornaments, pictures—wherewith to edify and adorn churches and monasteries, and from that origin Art in our land began. And Art in Christendom issued from the same fountain—the religious life. The beginning of painting in Christian Europe was the effort of pious hands, not to pourtray the human form, or the scenes of domestic or political life—no, the only motive

strong enough to inspire them and to bear them through the difficulties of the untried tasks, was the desire to set forth in form and colour, as we might in sermons, the scenes of the life of Christ, and the great incidents of the histories of the word of God. Human form, landscape beauty, were quite subordinate matters with the first painters. Mere conventional lines served for these. All that they cared for was the means of teaching some religious truth, or carrying forward some religious work.

The time came when men saw that the human form had a sacredness of its own, and that the forms and aspects of Nature had their sacredness too, and they began to paint them as lovingly, as reverently, as if they were passages of the lives of Saints. Turner spent as much reverent care on the curl of a wave, or the tint on the wing of a cloud in a sunset sky, as Angelico spent on a Coronation of the Virgin. But it spread from this centre outwards. All the great Christian arts began with men who wrought, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, at the structure and adornment of the Tabernacle. The place, or the mode, or the themes of divine service were in all cases the sacred springs from which the inspiration flowed. This was the living

core and centre of sacredness, from which the idea spread outwards in an ever widening circuit, until now it consecrates all the arts and industries of the Christian world.

I believe, then, that the highest use of the Tabernacle terminated when the building was finished; and that the essential power of the institution, as an elaborate and costly creation, lived on—not in the splendid tent, with its glowing colour and golden sheen, which lay gleaming like a gem on the bosom of their encampment—but in the industry, the energy, the genius, which the building of it had quickened, and which stored their tribute where God lays up all his choicest treasures, in the sanctuary of their personal, social, and political life.

The essential matter in the whole I hold to be this. That wherever there was life God suffered it to develope itself very much in its own way; or rather, He moved its development by living touches from within, instead of moulding it by institutions from without. Where there was life, no institution or ordinance, however sacred it once had been, was suffered to stand in its way. If that which was most living, most full of spiritual power in the land,—David's life, craved to have the Ark by its side, let the Ark be divorced from the Taber-

nacle never to be reunited to it more. If that which was most spiritual in Israel, the heart of David, and of Solomon in his young days, was moving towards a Temple, let the Tabernacle rot, and the Temple be edified in its room. God is with all that lives, to foster its free development. And we may well believe, from the examples of Scripture and from the necessities of the case, that nothing can kindle a purer joy in heaven, than when a venerable form or institution, no matter how sacred the associations which cling to it, bursts with the expansion of the glowing, enlarging life which it enshrines.

If new wine of the Spirit is working in old bottles, let the bottles perish, heaven says, if it must be, but in any case let not the wine lose its fire.

“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

This leads us to say some words on—

III. The Sacrifices of the Legal Dispensation. Is it possible to trace the same principle of freedom in the Jewish sacrificial institutions, taking a broad view of them, or must we consider that, in the

matter of sacrificial ordinances under Judaism, the formalism was conspicuous and complete? The subject is a very large and important one. I do not profess to discuss it here in its fulness. All that I can hope to do is to throw out a hint or two, which may possibly offer some guidance to those who are desirous of searching into the subject more fully for themselves.

Into the deeper questions which concern the origin and the nature of Sacrifice I have no need to enter. It springs out of necessities of man's nature; it can be only understood in the light of the great Sacrifice, and by those who see in the words "*Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world,*" a deeper meaning than is attached to them in a recent celebrated work on the life of our Lord. What we have to consider is, the sacrificial rites of a particular people, their number, nature, and ceremonial strictness, which were enjoined by very exact Divine command; with a view to determine whether we can discern in them that element of spiritual freedom which, through other features of the Dispensation, we have endeavoured to trace.

We must bear in mind, in considering the subject of Jewish sacrifices, that the institution existed and was maintained for a purpose which reached beyond

its influence on the Jewish people. It was distinctly a prophetic institution, which could only be fully understood in the harmony of the Divine purposes which the Christian revelation completes. There was much in the nature and the mode of the sacrifices which had little to do with the immediate needs of the Jewish people, but was rather prophetic of things which were destined to supersede them. The means which were taken to maintain the daily sacrifice must be looked upon as part of God's preparation of the heart of that people, and of humanity through them, to recognize and receive in the fulness of times "the Lamb of God," who should take away the sin of the world.

But it is well worth our while to consider the extreme simplicity and slightness of the sacrifices which were offered under the Law.

We must dismiss from our minds the hecatombs of victims offered on great occasions of public rejoicing, of which a notable instance occurs in 1 Kings viii. 62-66, at the dedication of Solomon's Temple. These were just the food of the people, consecrated by offering it in sacrifice before they partook of it; just as we sanctify the creatures of God by thanksgiving, when they are placed before us as our food. Of a very large proportion of the sacrifices we may

say, that they were the means of honest, wholesome festivity. The food offered to God, after paying, in some cases, its tax to the priest, was consumed by the man who offered it and his household, as they rejoiced before the Lord, and made the stranger and the needy the welcome sharers of their sacrificial feast. But the daily sacrifice, the heart's core of the institution, was of the simplest. (Num. xxviii. 1-10.) Equally simple and slight, in point of quantity and quality, was the sacrifice on the great day of atonement (Leviticus xvi.), while a few equally small and simple offerings gave expression to penitence or thanksgiving in connection with all the most serious occurrences and experiences of life.

There is in all that relates to the regulation of sacrifice the appearance of extreme formality. All that concerns the victim, the mode of offering, and the priest, who alone could present the offering, was rigidly defined. Is there not here, then, Ritualism in a very high sense? Is there not a care for form, mode, detail, and circumstance, which implies that they had a distinct value of their own, and that they marked out the one ordained way in which it was possible to arrive at spiritual results? It appears to me that the truth lies in precisely the opposite direc-

tion, and that the Jewish sacrificial institutions were distinctly a movement towards that which is spiritual in Sacrifice, and that only from this point of view can they be fairly understood.

The whole sacrificial legislation seems to me to have been, like that of the Sabbath, in its main purpose, protective,—that is, protective of that which is spiritual ; a barrier raised and maintained by God against ideas of Sacrifice, in which every thing spiritual would be utterly lost, and superstition would reign supreme. What is the distinctly superstitious notion of Sacrifice? Surely the idea that God is altogether such an one as ourselves, to be moved by the magnitude or the costliness of a gift ; that it is a question with Him too of quality and quantity, instead of the mind and will, which are behind the gift, and which can make the widow's farthing a more precious offering in His sight than the monarch's stores.

This is the unspiritual direction in which Sacrifice naturally develops itself. Hecatombs of victims—the blood bath of the Imperial Apostate—the shrieks of infant voices in the fires of Moloch—or the bloody mass of human clay under the dripping wheels of Juggernaut's brutal car,—here is the superstition of sacrifice. Its freedom is in the

simplicity, purity, and calm order of the Jewish rites, which the Law so rigidly secured. In Numbers xxviii. 1-10, you have the law of the daily sacrifice; Numbers xxix. 1-6 contains the order for a great festival day; Leviticus xvi. 6-16 that for the great day of atonement. The most striking thing in these ordinances is their extreme simplicity; as though the idea of Sacrifice, not without shedding of blood, which had to be kept before the mind of the people, for purposes which stretched on beyond their immediate education, was to be set forth at the least possible cost. Surely, looking at the whole spirit of the Dispensation, we are driven to believe that the main object of the Ritual, such as it was in extent and stringency, was protective. Its aim was to deliver the people from superstitious reliance on Sacrifice, lest they should think that God could be bribed to wink at their transgressions, or coaxed into tolerance of their sins. In fact it was the firmest safeguard possible in those days against Ritual superstitions, against such ideas of sacred offerings and daily sacrifices as have grown up in the Roman, and are spreading in the Anglican Church. Very notable too is the tone of appreciation of the real value of the sacrifices of the Law, which runs through all the deeper passages of the

Old Testament Scripture. David came to a point, and was not afraid to confess it, where the ordained Ritual could afford no help to him, and he cried, in the agony of his heart, "*For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it : Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*"—Psalm li. 16, 17. Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, writes boldly thus, "*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*"—Micah vi. 6-8. Samuel seems again and again to have departed from the letter of the commandment, wholly unrebuked, as the following passages record, 1 Sam. xi. 15; 1 Sam. xvi. 5. 2 Sam. vi. 13; 1 Kings iii. 2, 3; Judges ii. 5; vi. 26; xiii. 15, chronicle other departures from the ceremonial law equally unrebuked, and apparently approved by Heaven; while Isaiah in i. 11 and

lxvi. 1-3 expresses himself with a vehemence, which was doubtless stirred by the utter heartlessness of the observance on the part of a faithless and profligate people, but yet in terms which it would not have been possible for him to employ, had he regarded the legal order of things as of high moment to the national life. There are two passages from the Psalms with which I close this brief glance at the spiritual bearings of the sacrificial system of the Jews, "*Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High. And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*"—Psalm l. 7-15. "*Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-*

offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God : yea, Thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation : lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest.”—Psalm xl. 6-9. This last contains the very marrow of the whole. It expresses a thought which runs as an undertone through the whole Dispensation, which its deeper thinkers and purer spirits caught and echoed, until it spread more widely than we dream. The blood of bulls and of goats was nothing to the man who caught the deeper word of the Institution, and was led to that spiritual view of Sacrifice, which One in a human body would one day unfold, when He offered Himself a living Sacrifice for human sin. God had no reckoning with men on ceremonial grounds, when they entered within the veil, and held fellowship with Him face to face as sons.

Read Jeremiah's free and living words : “*I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices : but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people ; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it*

may be well unto you." And then open once more the handbook of Ritualism, and see what we have come to in these days.

"First appearances often decide the question of Friendship; and it needs but little imagination to conclude that many a foreign Catholic may have had his hopes of the Church of England blighted, when he saw so much wanting to assimilate the Externals of her worship to what he himself was accustomed to witness in his own Communion. Among other things it can hardly be doubted, that the Position of the Priest at the right hand of the Altar, would well nigh convince him that the great Christian Sacrifice could not be pleaded, when such an unritualistic feature everywhere presented itself."—*The Church and the World*, p. 495.

Read the two passages carefully, and compare their spirit, and then judge for yourselves how deeply Ritualism dishonours Judaism when it appeals to its authority, and how utterly its principles and practices are disowned by that portion of the word of God which the Ritualists look upon as all their own.

Sermon vii.

God's Ordained Ministers.

"Necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."—1. Cor. ix. 16.



INDEPENDENCY, driven for the most part to declare itself as nonconformity, is among the oldest and most sacred institutions of the world; and its teachers in all ages seem to have been selected to declare God's most precious and hidden counsel to mankind. We may suffer some scorn at the hands of the "Orders" of our time and those who believe in them, as our fathers did in their day; but from Melchizedek downwards it is an illustrious and mighty line whose traditions we inherit, and whose witness we have to maintain before the world. And so long as the truth of God is wider than any form in which the Schools, the Councils, or the Assemblies can clothe it—so long as the Church of God is a grander unity than the completest fold that man can build to comprehend it—so long as the Spirit has deeper and more manifold modes of access to human hearts and consciences, than the lines which

we lay down to be the recognized conductors of His power—so long the Independent preacher will stand forth as God's witness of this wider truth, this larger brotherhood, this imperial, transcendent, and all-permeating life.

A vital question with every Church is the right of its teachers to speak, and to claim audience in the name of the Lord. "God's ordained ministers" is a term of which we hear much from the lips of episcopal and clerical champions, and of which we shall hear a great deal more. And surely most justly. The more we hear of it the better. It is the question of questions with all of us. I believe that there is nothing which lies nearer to the heart of the true welfare and progress of society than a sound understanding of this question, Who are God's ordained ministers, by what signs are they to be known, by what right do they speak, and where lie the springs of their power to prevail with men. If we can get the answer of God's truth to the question, there is not much in the region of Church perplexities that will trouble us more.

God has ordained "that the Gospel shall be preached to all nations." There must be men ordained to preach it. Here is a Divine order—a Gospel, and men to preach that Gospel; and it is

a vital question in all ages to find these men, and to let them go freely forth to proclaim the Gospel, with such credentials as they may bear from God. For me, God's ordained ministers are none other than the men who have devoted themselves to the work of ministering to their fellow men, that which God in His love has ministered unto them. The real ordination is between themselves and God. I do not inquire whether they have had human hands laid solemnly on their heads or not. There is a very high sense—perhaps the highest—in which we have, in any company of Christian men and women to whom the Gospel is a vital reality, a company of God's ordained ministers to the world. “Convenience,” as Cromwell says,* and the exigent

* “Where do you find in the Scripture a ground to warrant such an assertion, that preaching is exclusively your function? Though an Approbation from men hath order in it, and may do well; yet he that hath no better warrant than that, hath none at all. I hope He that ascended up on high may give His gifts to whom He pleases: and if those gifts be the seal of Mission, be not ‘you’ envious though Eldad and Medad prophesy. You know who bids us ‘*covet earnestly the best gifts*, but chiefly *that we may prophesy*’; which the Apostle explains there to be a speaking to instruction and edification and comfort,—which speaking the instructed, the edified and comforted, can best tell the energy and effect of, and say whether it is genuine! If such evidence be, I say again, Take heed you envy not for your own sakes; lest you be guilty of a greater fault than Moses reproved in Joshua for envying for his sake.

“Indeed you err through mistaking of the Scriptures. Approbation is an act of convenience in respect of order; not of necessity, to give faculty to preach the Gospel.”—*Cromwell to the Scotch Ministers.*

claims of the business of life, hand over the work of public teaching very much to those who are able to give their whole lives to it. But if we ever dare to feel that thus a sacred order of qualified expositors of truth is developed among us, we are writing Ichabod on our Independency, which stands for the right and the duty of all servants of Christ to speak for Him and work for Him, as they are moved of the Holy Ghost.

Our right to teach is ultimately our power, and if the power be feeble, and the manifestation of it be dim, it is wisest to say little about our claims. The only substantial distinction which I can recognize in the various classes of Christ's servants, is in the degree of completeness with which they feel themselves called upon and able to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel, and the measure of power which such self-devotion may reasonably be expected to imply. I, at least—I speak only for myself—dare not feel myself in any sense the member of an Order, which does not comprehend also the poorest, the humblest, the most illiterate brother in Christ, who feels himself moved by the Holy Ghost to say a few stammering but faithful words as he finds opportunity to his fellow-men. Our right to speak and our claim to

be heard, are none other than those of every man who is moved of God to bear his testimony for Christ, in any way, in the audience of his fellows. We speak because Christ has laid upon us a necessity to speak. Some of us have devoted our lives to the work of preaching, because "a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto us," and "woe is unto us if we preach not the Gospel;" and our claim to be heard is the measure in which He who gave the commission reveals the power of it to the hearts and consciences of men. If we have not this Divine movement to the ministry, we have no right whatever to be heard; if we have it, it is idleness to talk about any meaner claims. Perhaps the most vital question at issue between us and the whole ritualistic school is this, Is this Divine order of the ministry a spiritual thing, to be discerned by the spiritual eye, and judged by the spiritual judgment of spiritual men; or is it a carnal, worldly thing, to be seen with the outward eye, to be read in genealogies, to be apprehended by the legal mind, and to appear in a visible corporate form to the world? In other words, are the prophets or the priests the fathers of God's "ordained ministers of the Gospel?"

There is a passage in the early history of the

liberty of prophesying, which is very noteworthy from our present point of view :—“ *And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders : and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad : and the spirit rested upon them ; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle : and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake ? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them ! And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.*—Num. xi. 24—30.” Now, of all men who ever lived, Moses was the man who might most fairly have claimed the monopoly of the instruction and leadership of the

Lord's host, and who might have been expected to look with jealousy on outbursts of prophetic power in new and unexpected quarters, which were wholly beyond the control of his hand. There was one at any rate, in the camp—a young, passionate, but short-sighted champion of the rights of his great leader, whose soul was filled with what he took to be righteous indignation, when men broke forth in the assembly with utterances which they claimed to have received direct from God without the intervention of the great prophet's hand. "Here," he was tempted to say, "is the very principle of disorder and confusion. There are but certain voices here which have a right to be heard in the name of God, But here is a new thing in the camp—Eldad and Medad—new men, uncalled men as prophets, are beginning to speak in the Lord's name, and to utter words which we have been wont to hear only from the most august lips. By what authority do they claim audience? If we allow their call, how far will it spread? How can my lord Moses maintain his supremacy if this novel and unauthorized teaching is to break forth? '*My lord Moses, forbid them.*' In the name of order, in the name of truth, silence them, and let there be only recognized organs of the Divine voice in our midst." But Moses,

the man of God, in his ripe wisdom, had hold of a principle which lies at the heart of the Divine method of government of Church and world through all the ages. Is there a new-born power there, it must be of God, and must bless and not hinder all who are in earnest about His work. Silence them ! God forbid ! More life, more light, no matter from what quarter it breaks forth, must make my work for God, for man, more easy, more fruitful. Let us pray God that the baptism may rain down in richer floods. We need it badly enough. The wisest men, the widest institutions, can but focus a portion of the vital power by which God is saving the world. Light from anywhere, life from anywhere, must be joyfully welcomed ; it can have but one ultimate fountain. " Forbid them ! " nay, "*Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them !*"

And this is the essential spirit of faith, the faith that blesses and welcomes all that has the glow of life in it, and is sure that it has a benediction and not a curse for the world. The spirit of the young champion of his leader's rights is the essential spirit of fear ; which, in the end, never fails to call out for mandates and inquisitions, and whose cry is ever,

Forbid, silence, destroy, maintain order, repress novelty, curtail freedom, proscribe genius, clog aspiration, and prison hope: if God has a work to do in the world, this is the one groove in which 'the wheels' must run; this is the sole highway of progress: what looks like progress in the by-ways of human energy, in new men, new thoughts, new forms, new methods,—above all, in a new spirit of zeal and love,—is dangerous. "My lord Moses, forbid it;" put a ban on it at once. Blessing it may be perilous work!

And where is the Moses, and where is the Joshua, in the camp of the Lord's host this day? I believe that we are on the eve of a sterner conflict than has ever yet been fought out on this subject of "Orders;" and that it becomes us to see very clearly, and hold very simply and firmly, our spiritual standing-ground, free from all the quasi-pretension with which we are sometimes tempted to prop it, under the idea of strengthening it, or we shall find it impossible to hold our position against the clear Roman principle, on the one hand, or its near kinsman, that of the Anglican Ritualist, on the other.

It seems to me that there is a question underlying all controversies as to the merits, Scriptural

or rational, of the platform of particular churches ; and that is, The men who are to stand on them. What is the principle of the Divine order in the conduct of the mission of the Church everywhere? When men say that they must uphold the divinely appointed Order of ministers and ordinances of the Church, I agree with them profoundly. I am quite sure that upholding anything else will, as Gamaliel says, "come to nought," and cover its upholders with shame. It is well, too, that we should be driven to think what is the divinely appointed order, and be sure that we fall in with it. And we may entertain a confident assurance that the principle of this order lies far beneath the questions about which the keenest controversies of the Church are waged—as to the merits of this or that institution, ordinance, or Order of men—which turn mostly upon the difficult interpretation of obscure and intricate passages of the word of God. It appears to me that there is one broad principle running through all the Dispensations of the universal Church, traces of which you may find on every page of Scripture, which is true of Patriarchal, Legal, and Christian ages equally, binding them all together in unity of principle through manifold forms of operation ; it is the law of the Church on earth through successive

ages, and will be the law equally of the Church in heaven,—viz., that the Divine Spirit in the Church is a Spirit of self-manifestation; that He moves whom, and where, and how He will, and claims the power to make known to the human heart and conscience the man by whom He is speaking, and in whom He is dwelling, independently of all external marks, signs, classes, and Orders in the world. That man, and that man alone, is in the Divine order of operation, in whom the Divine Spirit makes known His presence by his power to teach and help mankind.

And there are positively no external marks or signs, no connections with visible classes or Orders, which will help men to settle the question, Is this man God's ordained minister of truth or no? If a man asserts a right to be heard as a teacher in the Church, the Scriptural principle, conspicuous as the principle of Divine order under every Dispensation, binds us to test his right by his power. Rights and powers in this region are co-ordinate, and it is God who affirms the right by conferring the power. There is absolutely no other test, and the effort to construct tests which God has not constructed, and to apply formulæ which he has not formulated, for the discernment of His teachers, is at the root of

dire confusion in all the sections of the Church of Christ. I know that this may seem to some to be a very broad and absolute principle; but Christianity is very broad and absolute. Nothing is so broad and absolute upon earth as the Master's words. I know, too, that to Churchmen generally this principle will appear to promise nothing but endless confusion in the Church. If the only way of discovering a true teacher is by the truth which he has to offer, and the life that glows in his words, they tell us we shall have endless discords. So many men, so many judgments. We shall have all sorts of sects, all sorts of teachings, and all sorts of incapable men, setting up as the shepherds of Christ's flock. The people will get bewildered; they will not know whom to follow, and will in the end give up following Christ altogether in despair.

It is a very serious outlook,—very. I should be the last to deny it. The outlook is grave any way. Life altogether is grave, very grave, especially the higher forms of it; and, as you approach the spiritual region, the more grave and difficult does it become. Perhaps, though, while fully appreciating the perils and confusions into which liberty may easily plunge us, it is worth our while to consider how nearly the world has got bewildered and despe-

rate by that which orderly Churchmen would consider a more excellent way. They tell us that they have marks by which,—negatively at any rate, to take the lowest ground,—they can discern the divinely ordained minister at once; for, at least, none who bear not the marks can have any title to the name. There are duly authorised teachers of truth in England by thousands, authorised by those with whom the power of authorisation is believed to rest. And this we are told is the principle of order in the Church; by this, men are taught to whom they are to look for instruction, and are spared the bewilderment and confusion into which the principle for which we stand, we are told, would plunge the world. Well, but where is the confusion at this moment? Which is the distracted, bewildered body? Compare the Church of Rome and the Church of England with ourselves, our irregular and disorderly selves, and say. All that can be done by outward marks to designate the orderly teacher is done in the Church of England, as carefully as it was done of old in the priesthood of the Jewish Church. And admire the order which results: the absence of envyings, discords, and schisms, of classes of teachers hating each other's teaching, and striving before worldly tribunals to

oust each other from the Church. No oppositions of doctrine in neighbouring pulpits, no Romanising ceremonial, no rationalising theology, no cant, no heresy, no lies ; no charges trumpeted forth to the country—which I dare not underwrite, but which half England believes—that half the ministers of the regular Order lie unto God when they sign their Articles, or preach under the obligations to which their subscription binds them ! Why ! how long is it since we had the most lamentable, and by no means overwrought, complaints from bishops of the first eminence and influence, that the Church is in an afflicted and almost desperate condition ; that the mass of the people have drifted away from her guidance, and are swept on the shifty waves of speculation further and further from her ark ; while the only means of recovering them, in the judgment of these eminent persons, seems to lie in the restoration of the august powers of Convocation, the revival of the antique severities of penance, and limiting the circulation of dangerous and demoralising publications by shutting up the libraries ? Very recently an eminent Bishop declared, with an emphasis which nothing but the very gravest apprehension could have lent to his words, that we are in danger, here in Christian England, of pub-

licly dethroning Christ and enthroning Antichrist, and of worshipping the devil instead of the Lord. The ordained ministry of the Word! One might smile, if the matter were not altogether too sad for laughter, at the ludicrous contrast between the pretension of order and the actual condition of affairs. But we have a right to say to pious and intelligent members of the Church of England,—not scornfully, God forbid, sadly enough, knowing well our own great faults and flaws,—See what your principle of order, your carnal method of designating God's ordained teachers, has done for England. You have tried it thoroughly and for ages, and the confusion is worse confounded than ever. 'Come with us and we will do you good;' come, see if, opening our Bibles, we cannot show you a more excellent way.

It might be worth while to note, did time allow, that the first very notable figure of a recognized organ of God whom we meet with in the pages of Scripture, is expressly and most significantly stated to have belonged to no class or Order, to have derived his commission directly and independently from God, and to have had no power of transmitting it to his successors. Melchizedek is a grand figure in the misty morning twilight of his-

tory. He stands there to establish the position, and to justify the Orders, of every Independent minister of the truth.

But let us observe more at large, that God had under the Jewish dispensation a body of men most carefully designated by external marks, engaged in His service; but that it was not by the priesthood, but by a succession of individual and independent teachers, whom he raised up as they were needed, that He carried on His vital work among the Jewish people. Nothing could be more precise and clear than the constitution of that priesthood. The genealogies were perfectly kept; the formal qualifications for duty were carefully expressed, and if any man under the Law needed to learn what the Law ordained, he knew at once to whom to look. Through all the ages of the dispensation God had this visible Order of men at command for His purposes. But how rarely did He use them! How rarely did His communications reach the people through the priestly organ! How rarely through the priesthood was His purpose fulfilled! It is as though God would cast scorn upon this principle of order,—an order which could be maintained by descent and designated by gesture,—in that He so rarely called a man out of that Order to be His

organ of communication with the national conscience and heart. God gave them priests, perhaps that they might see, that the world might see, how little a priesthood could do to help them. Search the records of the people, and see how many deliverances, how many revivals, how many reformatations, can be traced to the priestly line. God sent them prophets, and by these independent voices—voices selected and inspired by Himself, with no regard whatever to the priestly or kingly line, caring only for the human stuff which He had need of for His purposes, and selecting it where He found it—He uttered His commands, maintained His royal rights, carried on all the higher concerns of the life of the Jewish people, and again and again restored the nation and saved the State.

And what credentials did they bear? How was a Jew to know his prophet, and to know when the Lord was speaking by his lips? We have a vague notion that the prophet was designated in some special miraculous way. We shall be astonished to find, when we look at the matter closely, how little help of this kind was afforded to the people. I think I may say absolutely, that there was no outward means of recognizing the man by whom the Lord was speaking to the people, whose life or

death were hanging on his word. There were signs, you will say, signs and wonders which marked out at once the supernatural man. Nay, God Himself expressly warns the people that the sign or wonder might become a snare. "*If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*"—Deut. xiii. 1-3. Not even miracles were to be marks, but rather occasions of and incitements to vigilance. God will have spiritual judgment brought to bear on spiritual things, and nothing in the universe can supply its place. The difficulties of our day, which to the Churchman seem deepened by the allowance of unauthorized Orders, were experienced to the very full by the Jew under the Law. Who will find my prophet for me. Who will show me the man under whose guidance I shall be absolutely safe? There is no such man,—but one Man. We stand for His supremacy—the one Priest and Apostle of the world.

How was Moses the great leader to be known? What commission did the Heaven-sent deliverer bear? Signs and wonders, again, we are answered. Yes, alas! But it is worth our while to see how purely spiritual was the first conception of his credentials as set forth in Exodus iii. He was to take with him a word, a spiritual word, no more: the people were to hear, believe, and be saved. "*And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met*

with us : and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."—Exodus iii. 15-18. God's appeal on behalf of His servant was to that power of recognizing what is of God, which the devil has not been able yet to tear out of human hearts.

Take the case of Micaiah (1 Kings xxii.). There were four hundred false prophets, and one true.* How was the true man to be discovered, and the false men denounced? Again, no external help of any sort. Their message was to speak for them. The whole sum of their influence was to testify which was of God, and which was of the father of lies. Jehoshaphat's instinct told him that the four hundred were lying. I think that even Ahab's instinct told him the same. Micaiah declared, "*Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.*"—1 Kings xxii. 23. But who was to answer Zedekiah's question, "*Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto*

* We know but little of the schools of the prophets; but it is not a little significant that when the prophets speak or act together in numbers as a school, they are mostly found misleading rather than guiding the people.

thee ?” There was no one to answer, but the still small voice within every earnest hearer’s heart. For those who cared not for the truth there was absolutely no answer. Micaiah could only say, I have delivered my message, and I must leave it. I can wait, and eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of affliction, till it be fulfilled. Take Jeremiah’s case : “ *Now Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends ; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it ; and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. Moreover, I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah*

will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house, shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.”—Jer. xx. 1-6. My message must speak for me. If that fails to convince, then events. They obey the hand of Him whose breath inspires me; they must sustain my words. The message of these men was their power. God was with them, and in His hand they left their cause. “Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.”—Jer. xx.

9-11. Rarely do these men seem to have been introduced by miracle to the people; rarely did the Lord designate them by any outward sign as the men whom the people were bound to listen to and to obey. The sword of the Spirit, keen and bright, was the one trenchant weapon with which He armed them, and the breast-plate of righteousness their sole defence against every foe. God's preachers of righteousness under the old Dispensation were not an Order; their life was a witness against Orders; and God put no mark upon them by which men might know them, but the seal of the Holy Ghost.

We generally hold that there is a chasm between the prophetic and apostolic ages. The voice of the prophet was silent for some centuries, and then the voice of the Christian preacher arose and filled the world. I would gladly, did my space allow, dwell at length on the grounds of my conviction, that in a far larger measure than we readily apprehend, that chasm was filled up by the Synagogue, the rise of which as an institution is tolerably coincident with the decline of prophetic power; while its forms and spirit opened out again, with a completeness which is too little appreciated, into the worship and discipline of the early Christian Church. The

voice of the prophet was silent, but an institution arose as his voice grew feeble and rare, the main object of which was to preserve his teaching and impress it on the popular heart. The Synagogue was an institution of an almost domestic character, expressly for edification and instruction. A few families could establish one for the purpose, just as with us a few families can form themselves into a church. The subject matter of the instruction was the prophet's word. We state but a partial truth in saying that the voice of the prophet was silent in the Jewish Church, while an institution was in full work in the land in which such a voice as this could be heard. "*And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book,*

and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.
—Luke iv. 16-22.

Now, without detaining you on the subject of the Synagogue, let me remind you that the essential principle of its virtue was that which I have been tracing through the prophetic ministry—freedom, freedom of action and utterance under the movement of the Holy Ghost. Men established the Synagogue who were inwardly moved to establish it, and the main question as to the *right* of teaching was the *power*: The man who had the gift was to exercise it, and diligently to cultivate it for further use; his having it was his one and all-sufficient right to speak. The teachers—*i.e.*, the men with teaching power—grew into influence under the system of the Synagogue. Men listened to teaching, wherever the teachers might come from, and wholly irrespective of the question whether they bore the traditions and influences of a certain line or Order of men, whose traditions might be supposed to be instructive, whose in-

fluences might be supposed to be helpful to mankind. The measure in which our Lord and His Apostles employed this institution is the measure of the value which they attached to it; and the manner in which the form of the first churches was developed out of it, is the sign to us that it stands in the true line of the Divine order, and that through the Synagogue we are to trace the vital development of the universal Church. And the essential principle here is the principle for which we are contending, by which our ministry stands, by which the prophets in old times stood—personal gifts and endowments bestowed by God as the furniture of His ministers for their work—their all-sufficient right, their only claim to be heard. How grandly free it was, and how powerful an instrument that freedom become for the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven, the history of the Apostles in their progress through the civilized world amply reveals to us. Look at Paul at Antioch: “*But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets; the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the*

people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”—Acts xiii. 14-16. (See also Acts xiv. 1 ; xviii. 1-8 ; xix. 8-10.) Here is pure “liberty of prophesying” in principle and practice; and God used it mightily as an instrument, as He will use it everywhere if we will trust Him, for establishing and extending the knowledge of His truth, and the reign of His King.

And now we pass on a step in tracing the development of this Divine order, and fix our thoughts for a moment on the Apostles and ministers of the early Church. Again the same principle reveals itself,—God calling men in whom He discerned the fit qualification for the work, and leaving that calling to make itself manifest by spiritual power to mankind. Of course, there was something very special and peculiar to themselves, in the position and work of the Apostles. I venture to believe that there was nothing special in the nature of the authority and influence which they claimed. They did not elect Matthias, they did not appoint the deacons, they did not determine the critical questions which had been opened by the daring ministry of St. Paul,—they simply shared the action of the Church. They were called, as the

Lord saw fit, from various classes and tribes ; nothing concerning the priestly tribe is spoken concerning any of them. They manifestly had no jealous sense that they were founding a new Order which might acquire rights and transmit them to successors, for they claimed no rights, as far as we can see, in virtue of their apostolic office ; and they allowed many, Barnabas, Epaphroditus, and others, to bear the name in common with themselves, as though to declare that it was nothing like a new Order with definite marks, rights, and duties, which they were constituting in the world. They were but regenerating an old Order, the oldest Order, the Order of Independent, God-taught witnesses and teachers of the Truth.

Nothing is more remarkable than the absence of any allusion to what might be considered specially apostolic rights and claims in the teaching of the Apostles and in their Epistles. Even in executing an awful judgment Peter makes nothing of his apostleship. "Thou hast lied unto the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost manifest there. Not to the man in whom by all rules He ought to be, not to the man whose office was the assurance of His presence, but to the Holy Ghost, in whose manifest presence, while the baptism of fire was

yet glowing upon their brows, Peter and the Apostles, and Ananias, too, were standing, and to whom, as manifest there, he lied. It was the sign of a present power which they prayed men to take note of; not a trace, not a hint, of their purpose to claim anything on the ground of an office or a commission, if the power were veiled or dead. But most important from this point of view is the fact that the Apostle of the Apostles—the man whose ministry cast that of the whole apostolic band into the shade, who is emphatically our Apostle, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the Apostle of the world—was an irregular Apostle, as irregular with regard to the rest, if they had been disposed to make an idol of regularity, as of old under the law the prophet was with relation to the priest. Can anything be more entirely in harmony with the principle which we have been tracing through all the Dispensations, than this statement of the great Apostle of the West? *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard*

A

of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."—Galatians i. 10-17. Paul, in fact, was called to the apostleship precisely as Moses was called to the leadership; and he was sent to the Church and to the world with little other certificate than his own knowledge that God had called him, and his own conviction that God would show to him the work which He had raised him up to do. Paul asked for no revelation to Peter and the Apostles that his name was to be joined to the glorious company; he asked for no testimony from those who had journeyed with him that he had seen the Lord in the way. He was slow to put this forth as the ground of any claim to a hearing. His power to work for Christ, and the work which

he had manifestly done for Christ, was the ground on which he deliberately chose to rest. Who can question that the whole energy of his intense nature flashed out in the words, "*Though I be not an apostle to others, yet, doubtless, I am to you, for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.*" Let alone my claims. No man ever gained anything vitally precious by claiming it. Let the power of Christ in me speak for me; if that wins me no authority and influence, I am content to remain obscure and powerless until death. But is it not a wonderful thing, and very full of light as to the method of God in leading on the progress of the Church and of mankind, that the foremost servant of God in his generation, and in all generations, was so entirely out of the line of any ordained Order in his call to the ministry, and occupied a position so purely original and independent, that it was only through hard struggle and bitter suffering that he compelled the recognition of it at all: while that apostleship which has literally filled the world with its power and its fame, was constantly, even in that Church for which he was ready to shed his best heart's blood, questioned, scoffed at, and denied. But he steadily refused through life to fortify his position

by connecting it with any authority but that of Christ. Through life he earnestly affirmed that he had derived nothing from, and owed nothing to, the most august names. "From the Lord I received my commission, by the will of the Lord I hold it, by the grace of Christ which is with me I maintain it," was his constant assertion; and he greatly cared to urge his claim only on those who had felt the power of his Gospel, and by whose living faith in the risen Saviour his commission as His preacher was sealed. On the whole, then, I think that to an unprejudiced mind the conspicuous thing in the ministry of the Apostles will be, their desire not to take separate ground of their own as the parents of an Order, but to take common ground in the matter of authority and influence, with every Christ-called minister of the truth.

I imagine that Prophets and Apostles could give but one account of their Orders, "Necessity is laid upon me to preach the Word; yea, woe is unto me if I preach it not." And if you and I, in our humble measure, are in the true line, we can give no other account of our own. "The Spirit moves me to do it. Preach I must. If these will not hear me, I cannot help it. I must go forth to find

those that will, not in a finer chapel, a larger sphere as it is euphoniously called, but wherever God gives me an echo to my words in human consciences and hearts." That is Independency—the call of God on the one hand, the power of spiritual men to recognize the call on the other. The two are co-ordinate. It is always thus in the Divine operations. Light for the eye, the eye for light. The minister for the church, the church for the minister. The unity of this dual action being the manifestation of the Holy Ghost. If I am taunted with the dependence of ministers on their congregations, and am told that they must preach so as to please that they may live, I answer that in the only Independency that I care to contend for, both minister and congregation are dependent on God, and must please Him, and not each other, or, like Ananias, they are lying unto the Holy Ghost, and may fall spiritually under the same doom, and be borne forth from the congregation of the living to an unhonoured grave.

The truth is, that a deep unbelief in the power of the Spirit to move men's minds, and to make His servants known by the living truth of their words, is at the bottom of this trust in Orders. I gladly quote in illustration of this principle the

words of a master, whose ministry was the purest illustration of the principle for which I am contending with which I have ever met.

“The truth is, the view presented wars with the *vis inertiae*, the sluggishness of the human intellect and heart. Weakness tries to narrow everything. Rules are substitutes for thinking. A man is praised because he has brought the truth into a nutshell, pared it down to suit his own grasp, determined it all by some single, simple proposition (because the rest of its elements ask for more room than he has to give): such a one is called a clear-headed logician. But all the while the truth has escaped him; it is but a *caput mortuum*, but ashes, that he has collected in his logical crucible; and truth remains, as before, wide and free as the heavens. And the heart is narrow as well as the head. We do not like the demands of the Divine Spirit upon us. A Church that is to subsist only in the strength of a perpetual dealing with the realities of her situation—a perpetual struggle, that is, against the devil, and the flesh, and the world—is too great a strain upon us. As the effort of modern politics has been to produce the effects of honesty by a certain mechanizing of unprincipled selfishness, the aim of modern ecclesiastical systems is so to mechanize a body of worldly men as shall answer the purposes of religion. But religion alone can answer these purposes: the Spirit alone can do spiritual work. ‘But how, then, shall we do without spiritual

men? On your principle, what rule shall supply their place?' You cannot do without them—no rule can supply their place."—*The first Principle of Church Government*, by A. J. Scott. *Discourses*, Vol. i. p. 317.

The whole system has its root in unbelief. It denies the Spirit in the Church and in the world. It has no belief in the order which will grow out of freedom, because it has no belief in the free Spirit who moves through and reigns over it all. Men rest on formal orders, because there is no belief in a Divine order, no hope that He who holds by the calm hand of His law the stars in their orbits and the constellations on their thrones, can and will, if we but trust Him, make an order as benign and beautiful in this jarred and jangled world. If there be no Spirit of God, no Holy Ghost in the world, able to make His own elections, His own ministers, His own demonstrations to human souls, we may institute as many Orders as we please, and claim for them what authority we like—it matters little. It is all a dreary imposition on the longing credulity of mankind.* And if there be a Spirit of

* I feel very anxious that my words on this subject should not be misunderstood. I do not hesitate to write strongly as I feel about those whom I might call the monopolists of Orders. Words can hardly

the Lord moving as of old the hearts of men, our one business is to recognize His order, as He reveals it to the eye of the spirit ; and bend all the energy of our being to sustain that order, and to make it effectual for the saving of the world. Those that will, may haunt the order of a trim, well-swept, well-clipped garden, which is the image of the utmost that human Orders can compass. Give me an order that hath a Diviner freedom in

express the mischief which in all ages such men have wrought in the Church. But I should be grieved if I were supposed to imply, that all who attach even a solemn importance to Orders, have feebler faith than myself in the rule of Christ through the Spirit in the Church. The man who, of all men now living whom I have known, has most impressed me with the reality and depth of his belief in the Spirit's rule and guidance of the Church, the Rev. F. D. Maurice, and whose words on this subject in "The Conflict of Good and Evil in our day" are profoundly impressive, is a priest of the Church of England, and manifestly attaches a very sacred importance to the position which he thus sustains. A large number of priests of the Church of England, like him, attach a high importance to Orders, but would, I imagine, be ready to say as heartily as Moses, "Would God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them." I may be unable to see with them as regards the importance which they attach to the position which is thus conferred, and I may think that the notion, even as they set it forth, is the source of a great deal of mischief and a hindrance to the truth ; but I dare not question the earnestness of their desire to be the organs of the living Spirit, and I feel assured that they rejoice as heartily as any of us, when they see the fruit of the Spirit outside their pale.

it, in tune with the large, free, splendid, exuberant world. If men anywhere, in any church, in any nook or corner of the world, are saying that the Spirit is moving them to speak words of truth, or to do works of ministry for man, we thank God for it. We say with Moses, "Would God all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" There is need of all, and more than all of us. God multiply the men who are moved by the Holy Ghost a thousand-fold, and may God move us with a thousand-fold freedom and power! May the line of the prophets live; may the Order of the priests decline—save as every Christian man and woman, by living like Christ, becomes priest and king unto the Father through Him, who is the one High Priest of humanity before the throne! Let our Orders have the baptism of the Spirit of life—that unction from the Holy One which is the only consecrating oil of spiritual office—and then, if we are told that we exercise an unlicensed and disorderly ministry, we can bear it very patiently. Nay, I am tempted to answer somewhat impatiently, Very well, I am thankful to hear it, when I compare what the licensed and unlicensed have in all ages done for the world. You who cling to your Orders, and

will have no unqualified and uncertificated helpers, though, as one of your own poets sings,

“Souls are wandering far and wide,
And curses swarm on every side,”

hold to the fathers of your Order, the Jewish priests, the orderly certificated ministers of the ancient Church; and leave me alone to my unlicensed ministry, which, if the Spirit seal it not, has no claim to be heard, and can have none, but which, if I have been truly moved to it, and am under a Divine necessity to exercise it, has Prophets and Apostles for the founders of its line. And now, brethren of the Independent Ministry, where is the power? This our one right to be heard,—is its utterance clear and strong? Is God attending our ministry with the demonstration of the Spirit and power from on high? Is this the main aim of all our associations—to seek a new baptism of the Holy Ghost, new knowledge, new energy, new self-consecration, new life? Is it our platforms that we are chiefly thinking about, or our powers; our tools or our sinews; our organization or our energy; our status or our life? “Would God all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” In the Spirit and by the Spirit we have lived hitherto;

because of the measure of spiritual power which has been in us, we have done what it has been given us to do for our country and for the world. May God grant that this may be our fontal force and our crowning glory still—loyalty to the living Saviour by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost! May our benediction ever be the benediction of the inspired seer as he gazed from the mountain-crest on Israel, and his eagle glance flashed as it ranged over their gallant and splendid array!—"The Lord his God is with him; and the shout of a King is among them." "The King who shall rule in righteousness, the Prince who shall reign in judgment; the man who shall be as a hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"—whose kingdom as "God's ordained ministers" we have to preach unto the world.

Sermon viii.

Ritualism, in its Present Aspects and Aims.

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?"—Acts xix. 15.



REGARD the Anglo-Catholic movement, which has been the main topic of these pages, as an attempt to establish an essentially base and demoralizing mode of Christian influence; unauthorized, in the most solemn sense which that word will bear; and radically little higher than the method of "the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew," in its origin, aim, and hope. It is Christian in name and dress, while it is worldly in spirit and sensual in heart. The names which it uses are holy and reverend, but it makes no higher or more Christian use of them than the pagan makes of his talisman—a charm to master spirits and bring them under his control. But it would be a great mistake to regard it lightly, as a casual and unnatural excrescence on the system

of the Christian Church. The saddest thing in the history of Christianity is the extent to which it has been the history of this principle, rather than of the influence of the Spirit of the Divine Author of Christianity on the world. It is among the gravest questions of all times, and emphatically of these times; when a most resolute and persistent attempt is being made to raise this principle again to the head of the hierarchy of spiritual powers, in the land which three hundred years ago decisively renounced it and cast it out.

Its wider aspects and bearings have already occupied our attention. We have traced its connection with principles which have been potent in the Church in all ages, counter-working the essential principles of the Gospel, and destroying all that is most distinctively Christian in Christianity.

In closing this brief series of discourses it may not be inappropriate to consider Ritualism in its more limited relation to the special characteristics and tendencies of our times, and the measures by which we may hope to deal with it with some fair prospect of success.

I believe that it strikes its roots very deeply into those characteristics and tendencies. It belongs to the world and the time in which we are living,

and it is the natural outgrowth of that which we either foster or allow. And this constitutes its real danger. No errors or evils are formidable, if their roots are not fed by that which enters into the daily habits of our lives. It is the measure in which their spirit infects those who are all unconscious of the influence, and who may hate the form of the error very heartily, which makes them mischievous on a large scale to society. And this Anglo-Catholicism is no surface movement. Its dress, its fripperies and fooleries, are by no means the most formidable part of it. It is not only or chiefly the luxury of over-cultivated and sentimental women, or the refuge of doubt-weary, morbid, or desultory men. It has firm hold on strong minds and brave, earnest hearts. The men who lead the movement mean much by it, and see much in its future. They believe it to be a great instrument of power, and they intend to make it a mighty missionary influence in the land. It is gravely handled, and must be gravely regarded by those who seek to resist it, and to point out to those who are in danger of being drawn into its current, a more excellent way.

Nor can I lay it against its leaders as a charge, that they are seeking, by their splendid "*spectacle*,"

to captivate and gain influence over the poor. The effort to gain and to use such influence is common to all Church parties, and they learn it from the highest Teacher. It is the *kind* of influence which we have to judge, and the *means* by which that influence is sought. I have no sympathy with the charge of "cunning craftiness" which is often flung at the teachers of this school, as though they were seeking to establish an influence for base and selfish ends. They are trying to do in their way, precisely what I am trying to do in mine. I delight, as you know, to get our poor neighbours together as frequently as possible, to crowd our rooms with them, to let them see beautiful objects and hear beautiful music, and I spend as much effort to make them pass a cheerful happy evening as if they were my own personal friends. I delight in the influence which this establishes. I hope earnestly that in a humble way it may help forward the work of the kingdom of heaven in our neighbourhood. I am so distinctly conscious that I have nothing but the highest good of my poor neighbours in view in these efforts, that if any man were to assert that my aim is to attract them to my own chapel, or to magnify the influence of any particular church, I should repel the insinuation, as

sternly, as I crave leave to repel it on behalf of the Ritualists now. According to their light they are winning the people to their own good. I dare not lay any meaner motive to their charge. If it were a matter of mere crafty scheming it could not long evade its doom.

And when they say to us, as they say in substance, You have been trying what you could do for the great mass of the poor for years, for generations, with your severe services, your prayer meetings, your lectures, and what have you done? Walk through the back slums of Gray's Inn Lane and Hatton Garden and see what you have left after all your effort, now let us have our turn and try what we can do by our methods—some of us would be for the moment puzzled for an honest reply. We may see very clearly whither it is all tending. We may believe that nothing but the crater of an extinct volcano will be left in time in a soul, in a society, or in a nation, in which a priesthood has had full play. But I am so sure that an outward and visible reformation of manners and morals, would be one of the first fruits of the influence of these men in any class which they might get hold of, especially the lowest, that we need to cling very firmly to the first principles of

the Gospel, and to hold fast the conviction that nothing but degradation and despair can, in the long run, come of departing from them, if we are to brand the movement with the stern anathema which it deserves.

I propose to offer to you some thoughts on the origin of the movement so far as it has any special relation to our times—the causes in our social and ecclesiastical state from which it springs.

In its present form it is about thirty years old. It has lived through and in some measure leavened one generation, and it is fixing its roots very deeply in a second. The first of the "Tracts for the Times" was published about a generation ago. I have already stated that it is entitled, significantly enough, "Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission." The author of that tract contends strenuously—if so feeble an effort can be in any sense strenuous—for the reassertion of priestly authority and power. That is his first step, and from his point of view he is right. The heart's core of the movement lies there. I feel no disposition in speaking of its present aspects, to trouble you or myself with discussions about ceremonies, gestures, and ornaments. We hear too much about the "millinery element," which is not worth a thought,

except it be the cloak of far graver things behind. These are but the outermost garment of an idea of Christian truth and Christian influence, which has for centuries been dominant in Christendom; which the Reformation shattered among all Teutonic peoples, but which a very numerous and powerful body of thinkers are resolutely endeavouring to restore.

It is marvellous in our eyes that in the heart of this nineteenth century, and in incomparably the freest country in the world—I say this with all respect to America—and among the most educated and accomplished Englishmen, nursed in the midst of the stirring liberal agitations which have given us Reform, Religious Liberty, and Free Trade, a movement should have originated to re-establish ideas and modes of Christian thought and influence, which in the twelfth century St. Bernard would either have laughed to scorn, or lashed to death with the two-thonged scourge of tongue and pen which he wielded with such terrible power, and with which alas! he slew so many good things as well as bad things in his time. But strange as it may be, here it is, extant among us; and we have to account for it, and to try to understand how intelligent and free Englishmen can throw them-

selves into the movement, and entertain the slightest hope that it will help forward the progress of the kingdom of truth in the world.

There are three sources of the movement which I select from many that occur, as perhaps the most important, the consideration of which may help us to understand its growth at the present time.

I. I hold it to be a reaction against the Doctrinalism of the Evangelical School.

When I use the word Doctrinalism I desire not to be misunderstood. By Doctrinalism I do not mean Doctrine. Doctrinalism is to Doctrine as Ritualism is to Rite. It is the form treated as the substance; the means regarded as having the value of the end. Of the importance of sound doctrine to a healthy and fruitful religious life, it is impossible to speak too seriously. The Gospel of "earnestness" is about the most misleading Gospel which can be preached to men. No doubt it is a matter of primal exigency, that a man be in earnest whatever he may believe. But that is simply saying, that if he is to be worth anything in the higher sense, he must in any case be alive. But if the question of what a man believes be relegated to

a quite secondary position, as is the case in the teaching of a great and influential school, I believe that all kinds of weakness, and ultimately the decay of the life itself, must be the result. Sound doctrine is to sound living what the bones are to the bodily frame. Sound beliefs are the skeleton framework of the godly life. The erect form, the manly vigour, the free use of the faculties and organs, depend on the soundness and sufficiency of that framework. But a skeleton is not a body—a truth which the Doctrinarians are much tempted to forget. The bones must be clothed with flesh ; you want the bands and muscles of practical personal conviction and habits of action, you want the soft flesh of sentiments, sympathies, and affections, you want the tact, the touching power, of instincts, sensibilities, and vital attractions, to round and incarnate the whole. Still sound belief is the backbone, and where the matter of the belief is slighted, and sincerity is considered all in all, you may have what looks like a beautiful form, a body fair to behold and with fair promise of use, but it will have no more substance than a jelly-fish ; it will be all pulp and humour, and at the first great wound or strain all its promise will drain swiftly away.

It is, then, through no want of belief in the

importance of sound doctrine, that I speak of the Doctrinalism of the Evangelical school as one of the chief sources from which Ritualism as a reaction springs. I am much struck, in reading the writings of the leaders of the school, with the kind of sneer with which they speak of the "faith" which forms so essential a feature in the doctrinal system of the Protestant Churches. They speak of faith as simply an intellectual act, and contrast it with their own warmer and more vital method of enlisting on the side of the truth the sympathies of man's sentiment, the play of his imagination, and the passion of his heart. With them, to believe, in the Protestant sense, is simply to think that you assent to certain statements, or perhaps only to say that you assent to them ; and they say that this personal impression about these transcendent themes, is altogether too weak and shifting a basis to bear the edifice of a Christian life. They have no eye for and no belief in that living faith, which works by love, which combines and concentrates the action of mind, heart, and spirit, and establishes through the operation of the Holy Ghost that living personal sympathy and fellowship with Christ Jesus, which is real and vital as the communion which a man has with his friend.

But I would ask in all seriousness whether the way in which doctrine has been handled in the Evangelical Schools, is not partly responsible for their delusion. The well-nigh uniform formulæ, doctrinal and experimental, to which we expect all to conform in whom we are prepared to recognize the manifestation of spiritual life, appears to these Anglicans to narrow to a small sect of thought and experience what was meant for the wide world. They protest against the purely subjective character of our gauge of discipleship. They think that this great matter, man's redemption, cannot be wholly determined in its vital bearings by the notions, or as they sneeringly say, the dreams and fancies of oftentimes foolish and ignorant hearts. They cannot see that our discriminating tests are real. They say that they find in our Churches of the purest communion, pretty much the same follies and sins, the same vanities, jealousies, and hates, which they observe outside our pale. They object to our purely arbitrary classification of transgressions; the care with which we guard against fleshly sins or scandalous vices in our Churches they recognize with honour; but they do not honour our tolerance of sins of another class, perhaps as deadly, for they say that "envy, hatred, malice,

and all uncharitableness," evil speaking, suppression of truth, and false suggestion, flourish in Evangelical literature and Evangelical Societies, as freely as anywhere about the world. They point, too, to the commercial world, and they tell us that our tests of "experience" are fallacious. They show us how constantly the metal which has passed our proof will not stand the pressure of the world in such an age as this. And then, flying off as men are wont to the opposite extreme, they insist on some outward objective mark of relation to the kingdom, and some practical rather than experimental, or as they would call it theoretical, test of progress in the spiritual life. And let us understand too, that if we suffer the petty idol of a popular preacher's dicta to be set up in our Evangelical circles, and to be treated with a reverence which one word only may command, men outside our pale will not be slow to seek the broader refuge of the teaching of an Order which has the traditions of eighteen centuries to lend dignity and authority to its doctrine; nor, if we persist that we have the complete measures of the truth of Christ in our unwritten formularies, will men be backward in adopting the creeds of Christendom as authoritative standards in their room.

There is another point which falls very fairly under this head, which I need only indicate, as substantially it has been the topic of a previous discourse. The same blundering desire to apply a prompt and trenchant remedy to a very palpable evil, which leads them to set up Sacramentalism against Doctrinalism, leads them to set up Dogma against that Rationalism which they believe that Protestantism has engendered, and which they see no hope of meeting in any more effectual way. The root of their method in both cases, as I have endeavoured to shew at length, being unbelief—unbelief in the possibility of discerning and accepting the vital manifestations of the Spirit; and unbelief in the power of Truth—of right reason, not bound and hampered in dogma, but with the sword of the Spirit in its grasp, and with its sword arm free—to drive in time oppositions of “science falsely so-called,” out of the world.

II. I believe that it is adopted as a means of influence over wide classes of men, in the conviction that some such influence is absolutely needful to reclaim them and keep them in the right way.

Very able, cultivated and high-minded men are tempted to look hopefully to this Ritualism as a means of influence over the masses, through sheer

hopelessness of their being influenced in any higher and nobler way. A high-minded Romanist has recently hinted pretty plainly, that the grossnesses of modern Mariolatry are really idle and mostly unknown things to him, but that something of the sort must be supplied to ignorant and sensual souls. I trace the same deep distrust in the power of the truth on the one hand, and the power of the people to be led by the truth on the other, through all the writings of the Anglo-Catholic school. They seem to believe in their hearts that men must be led, tempted, coaxed, captivated, frightened, into the way of truth—in fact anything but taught. A teaching which has for its earnest and constant aim the education of men for self-government and self-guidance, under the highest rule, in spiritual things, wins no sympathy from them, and kindles no hope. Higher influence than “direction,” in the Romish sense of the word, direction personal and ecclesiastical, they have no belief in; and any belief in it which others may entertain seems to them a delusion, a mockery, and a snare. Their system, in fact, is moulded on the belief in the everlasting babyhood of mankind.

We need only to read their books to comprehend the sad words of Christ,—nay, indeed, will not

even our own freer and purer system teach us how much may be meant by them?—" *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?*" Will the very men who stand foremost in His Church, and protest loudly the exclusive right to speak and to rule in His name, have a shadow of belief in the power of His truth to guide men's reason and the power of His Spirit to emancipate and consecrate their hearts. Will He find His Priests and Bishops, the men who boast their succession from His hand, forsaking truth as an idle dream of power over spirits, and betaking themselves to the theatre, the club, and the gin palace, to study the art of Christian influence over men? These are strong words. I should not dare to use them if they were deductions of my own as to what the principles of this school may mean. But I quote their own words:—

"And here again, a lesson may be learnt from one of the least pleasant forms of ordinary life. There is no institution so widely and universally popular among the London poor as the gin palace, from the craving for drink, and it would seem that no additional inducement would be needful to win customers across the threshold, and to retain them as long as possible on the premises. Yet it is not so. . . . Internal decoration, abundant polished metal and vivid colour, with plenty of

bright light, is found to pay, and to induce people to stay on drinking, just because everything is so pretty and cheerful to the eye, and so unlike the squalid discomfort of their own homes. If then, painting, light, and music, are found necessary adjuncts in a trade which has already enlisted on its side one of the strongest of human passions, it is the merest besotted folly to reject their assistance when endeavouring to persuade men to accept and voluntarily seek an article for which they have never learnt to care, even if they are not actively hostile to it—to wit, Religion.”—*The Church and the World*, p. 39.

The terms “Trade” and “an Article” are curiously significant here. It was not “an article” which Wesley and Whitfield had to offer to the debased and ignorant population of our mining and factory districts, nor were lights, pictures, and music, found at all needful to win for them an audience of human consciences and hearts, and to quicken a revival, the fruits of which the Church of England herself is feeling most blessedly even to the present day.

The passages on the theatre and the club procession are in precisely the same key; but the following will probably be more interesting :—

“A good deal of the Arian success was due to their processions and hymns. St. Chrysostom determined to meet them on their own ground; and by organizing far

more magnificent processions, with all the apparatus of crosses, banners, and incense, together with the aid of powerful and well-trained choirs, chaunting hymns more swinging and effective than his rivals had used, succeeded in thinning the Arian congregations, and in filling his own churches with honest attendants at the gorgeous ritual which yet bears his name."—*Ibid.* p. 45.

St. Athanasius in the desert, and St. Chrysostom with crosses, banners, incense, and "swinging" hymns, is an instructive contrast for the study of those who care to know how Arianism fell and how Churches are won to the truth.

It is deliberately intended to establish a widespread and powerful influence over the masses by such arts as these. I am not called to consider the likelihood of success. I can only say that those who are disposed to dismiss that likelihood with contempt, have one eye at any rate blind to history. But the Ritualists mean this honestly and earnestly; believing, alas! that there is open to us no more excellent way.

III. It seems to me to be the translation into the spiritual sphere of that luxurious splendour which is characteristic of our times, and which threatens to corrupt the very core of society.

We do not believe much in the simple, honest

crust, either of the bread which perishes, or of the bread of life. Ours is emphatically an observant, reflective, and critical age. No great enterprise stirs deeply our passions, and strains our energies to win the prize. We are living on the fruits of victories. If we were to cast our glance back into mediæval times, we should find that in ages of great enterprises, the men who were most profoundly in earnest about them, spoke with a kind of contempt of this externalism in religion. They had no time for it, no care, no heart. But we have time enough; we have wealth enough to puzzle us how to employ it; and we have learning enough to have all the ideal aims and hopes of the past spread before our sight. And we are disposed to repeat with exquisite care and finish, rather than to create. There is not a great work of this generation which is not greater in its parts than in the whole. From our Palace of Westminster downwards through the whole scale, the same principle reigns: poor form, poor power, but exquisite conception and elaboration of parts. It runs through all the arts, all the ornaments and appliances of life. It is in our drawing-rooms and in our dress, as much as in our poems, books, pictures, and buildings. There is a genius for

organization rather than creation ruling in our high places. We aim at a scale of vastness and splendour, but we obtrude everywhere the manager's hand. The kind of effect, too, which grows out of mobs and masses, in commerce, in railways, in concerts, yes, and even in congregations, is highly valued by us, to the no small neglect—I will not say contempt—of that which belongs to the sphere of spiritual power, in its action on the individual and the public life. These Ritualists simply translate this into the spiritual key. It is in principle what the world is loving in its public and private interests and occupations; the Ritualists say, It shall have it also in the Church. If it wins its way (that has to be tried) it will be the darkest and saddest of all possible signs of what men in their hearts are caring for, and of how far a clever, rich, successful, and luxurious generation, may in this nineteenth century of Christendom, loose its hold on all that is most essentially Christian in Christian truth.

I have thus fulfilled, to the best of my power, within necessarily narrow limits, the task which I proposed to myself. I have endeavoured to connect the most prominent religious topic of the day with the ideas and principles which have rent the Church

with fierce contentions from the first days of the Gospel until now; and to treat it in its broader and more permanent relations to the kingdom of Truth and the progress of mankind. I have adopted advisedly one remarkable and characteristic book as the text-book of the Anglo-Catholic party, and have quoted somewhat largely the passages which seem to me to set forth most prominently its spirit and aims. A Nonconformist who ventures to criticise the principles and tendencies of parties within the pale of the Establishment, exposes himself to sharp rebuke. I do not answer by anticipation that rebuke, by declaring, that as the Church of England claims me as a member, and forces that claim upon me in very definite and practical ways, I have a member's right to speak where her faults or follies are in question, if I have any word of truth to say. But I claim no such membership, and if I speak it is on other grounds. The Anglican Church is but a branch of the Church Catholic, of which I do claim to be a member, and our real interests are one, the interests of the Truth. I claim the right of one who loves the truth and seeks it—which also every Church by its constitution is bound to do—to judge according to the light which Heaven affords me, whether any

particular Church, in any special circumstances, is helping the truth or hindering it; and, if the occasion call for it, to offer my thoughts to those who care to know them among my fellow men. But most grievously shall I have failed to express my convictions, if I allow any of my readers to suppose that I entertain the notion that any Church or Churches have a monopoly of the errors whose roots I have endeavoured to trace; or that there is no need of intense and vital struggle against the spirit of these very errors in the Nonconformist Churches, whose members have found, as I believe, the more excellent Catholic and Apostolic way.

FINIS.

MARCH, 1867.

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